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The Long Island FISHERMAN

The Largest Weekly Sportfishing Magazine in the United States!

Volume 15, Number 1 ★ January 3, 1980

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Night fishing permits for all Long Island State Parks except Caumsett will be available free at all park offices after the first of the year 1980. Permits for Caumsett State Park will be available at either the park office at Caumsett or at the Long Island State Park Commission headquarters in Belmont Lake State Park, Exit 37 North, Southern State Parkway. The charge for the Caumsett permit will be $10.00 and due to the special nature of that park only 400 permits will be issued. You may obtain the permit at Caumsett 7 days a week, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., but it is a good idea to call the office in advance. At park headquarters in Belmont Park, permits may be obtained Mon.-Fri., 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

RECENT BLUE SHARK TAG RETURN DEMONSTRATES TRANSATLANTIC MOVEMENT

Under NOAA's Co-operative Shark Tagging Program, over 2000 volunteer fishermen on both sides of the Atlantic have tagged thousands of blue sharks and other species as part of a study of shark abundance, migrations, stock identification, growth and reproduction. On October 3, 1979, a blue shark that had been tagged near Hudson Canyon (NY) on September 20, 1978, was recaptured in the Straits of Gibralter off the North African coast (3200 mi in 352 days) by a Spanish fisherman. This is the longest distance travelled by a tagged blue shark, and is the first direct evidence to show movement of this species between the Atlantic and Mediterranean. Previous long distance recaptures from blue sharks indicate that they orient to and move within the clockwise flow of the major ocean currents in the North Atlantic. Based on an analysis of recapture data from tagged blue sharks the "round trip" Atlantic route of a shark tagged off New England would likely consist of a northeasterly movement in the Gulf Stream to the vicinity of the Azores, then southward in the Azores or Canary Currents toward the offings of the African coast and into the Equatorial Current that flows westward from Africa toward the Caribbean and finally merges with the Gulf Stream. While this route provides a reasonable explanation of the long distance recaptures, it is apparent from other data that long range movements are but part of a more complex pattern that includes shorter and somewhat separate migrations of blue sharks along both the North American and European coasts. An understanding of the degree to which populations in the northwest and northeast Atlantic intermix will be important to any attempts to manage blue shark populations in the future.

M.C.A. OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 1980

At a regular meeting in November, the following board was elected to office by the MCA. President, Bob Bozek; Vice President, Joe McBride; Treasurer, Bill Bock; Secretary, Fred Riege; Trustees, Frank Maccaro, Sal Panto and Whitey Bateman.

The officers were introduced at the Associations annual dinner dance held at Brasby's Restaurant by Past President, Frank Maccaro.

L.I. BEACH BUGGY ASSOC. OPERATION CHRISTMAS TREE

The popularity of Operation Christmas Tree held annually by the Long Island Beach Buggy Assoc.)libba) has been declining over the past few years, but last year took the prize. More trees, less workers and lousy weather conditions gave us the worst year ever; and we, your committee, remember it well. This is the main reason we decided to re-vamp the whole operation.

All road work will be done on January 5th, with all pick-ups limited to a close radius. January 6th will be a back-up day. All beach work will be done on the 12th, backed up by the 13th. We expect to have large truck for **both** the road and the beach, therefore everyone will be working together on both weekends. Use and abuse of your vehicles will be limited as most of the work will be done by the large vehicles. Fuel for all trucks will be available: gas-regular and unleaded, and diesel.

This year's food will be hot dogs & sauerkraut instead of bologna sandwiches. If you've never participated in Operation Christmas Tree—you'll love it; if you have tried it and hated it, you'll like it now; and if you've always enjoyed it, you'll enjoy it more! So why not back your club by lending a hand. Dress warm, bring a friend—or even bring a friend's friend. The Time: 8 a.m., Saturday, January 5th, 1980. The Place: Island Grill, Sunrise Hwy. & Phyllis Drive, East Patchogue.

SEAL COUNTING UNDERWAY

The Marine Environmental Council of Long Island, Inc. will again coordinate the Long Island area for the Annual Seal Count made each year by the University of Rhode Island, Graduate School of Oceanography. The count is taken each year from New Hampshire to Long Island and the public is requested to help out by reporting seal sightings of any nature.

Forms on which information is to be reported may be obtained by writing to the Marine Environmental

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Paul Neff, right, and John DeMalo bracket the 330-lb. giant Atlantic Bigeye Tuna that Paul caught this spring during a junket to the Madeira Islands by a group of Long Island sport fishermen. See the article on page 20.

COMING NEXT WEEK: **N.Y. BOAT SHOW ISSUE**

Richard Reina, PUBLISHER
Al Ristori, ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Pete Barrett, NEW JERSEY EDITION
Scott J. Simons, MANAGING EDITOR
Fred Golofaro, ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Tim Coleman, NEW ENGLAND EDITION
Dr. W.A. Muller, EDITOR
Stu Miller, ADVERTISING MANAGER
Rich Reina, PRODUCTION MANAGER

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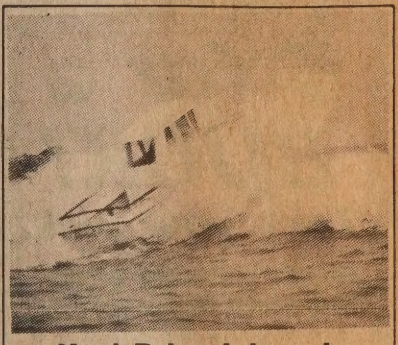

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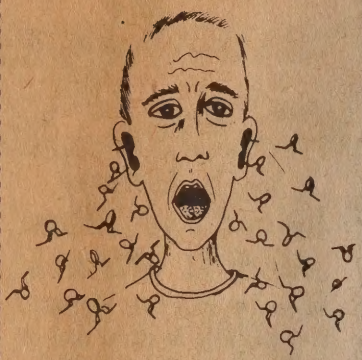

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The Fighting Chair

with Scott Simons

ROMER SHOALS SAVED

As a direct result of the thousands of sport fishermen that protested the dredging of Romer Shoals proposed by the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, it appears that Romer Shoals has been saved. Responding to the more than ten-thousand letters of protest received from New Jersey and New York sport fishermen, the State of New Jersey has decided to modify their dredging permit so that Romer Shoals, which is on the west bank of Ambrose Channel, will be untouched. The dredging will still be done, however, but it will be confined to the east bank where it is expected to do little if any damage to the marine environment. We would have preferred to see no dredging done in the area until an Environmental Impact Statement had been prepared, but under the circumstances this is an acceptable compromise that we can live with.

Sport fishermen can claim a victory in the Romer Shoals controversy because they have once again shown that when the chips are down they will unite and take action, a fact that has not been ignored by elected officials. You just don't ignore more than 10,000 letters from outraged voters! As a result, there is no question that an incident like this one will not take place in the future—"they" know we are out there now. To prevent similar incidents in the future, Jerry English, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has publically stated that any dredging projects in the future will be reviewed by the new Marine Fisheries Council before it can be approved. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is presently making a study to determine where the prime recreational fishing areas are located in the New York Bight so that it may go on record **in advance** with the Army Corps of Engineers that there should be no dredging allowed in these areas.

In the future we hope to see a little more common sense shown in where dredging materials to be used for fill are taken from. Instead of dredging in prime areas like Romer Shoals where great harm may be done to recreational fishing, how about dredging in areas where there will be a **benefit** to the public? How about dredging in some of our more dangerous inlets, making them safer in the process? Or dredge in an area that is relatively void of marine life and create a new habitat in the process? For example, the barges that bring the dredged fill to shore then return empty for another load. Why not fill them with materials that will make a good artificial fishing reef? There are plenty of free materials available for the construction of artificial reefs, but no funds available to transport them to reef sights. If our states would propose a dredging project that would make an inlet safer or give us a new artificial fishing reef in the process, I think they would find that instead of receiving ten-thousand letters of protest they would receive overwhelming support from the millions of sport fishermen that live in New York and New Jersey.

Credit for this victory must go to the individual fisherman that took the time to write a letter or send the postcard that was inserted in The Fisherman. The pre-printed postcard concept worked fantastic, so we plan on using it in the future for other battles that must be waged to protect the quality of our sport. Thanks must also go to the many state officials that gave their support to our cause despite the fact that they may have "rocked the boat" of their respective bureaucracies in the process.

Scott F. Simons

Council of Long Island, Inc., P.O. Box 55, Seaford, I.i. N.Y. 11783. A self-addressed stamped envelope is requested when writing for the "Seal census Form".

NOTICE

Will KEVIN COOPER please contact Susan, at The Fisherman office.

We must have an incorrect address for you. Mail sent to New York 10032 is always returned. Thanks.

NEW ENGLAND ENFORCEMENT POINT SYSTEM

A proposed system which may result in suspension of fishing permits of U.S. fishermen who violate the regulations that enforce the conservation plan for cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder off the New England coast has been announced by Terry L. Leitzell, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Assistant Administrator for Fisheries.

Fishermen who catch these species in the U.S. Fishery Conservation Zone are required to have a permit issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976.

Under the proposed system, the permit of a fisherman who violates the regulations will be assessed from one to three points, depending on the severity of the violation.

Leitzell explained that the change is intended to make more predictable to the fisherman the possible effect of a violation and to further encourage compliance with the conservation plan.

If a fisherman receives a total of eight points, his permit to fish for cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder will be suspended automatically for 30 days. If the fisherman receives another eight poins within nine months, his permit will be suspended automatically for 60 days. At the end of the suspended period, all points which caused the suspention will be removed from the permit.

For each one-year period for which no violations are charged, two points will be subtracted from the total against the vessel's permit. If the vessel is sold, any points or suspension against the vessel will be carried over to the new permit that is issued to the vessel.

Permit points will be assigned as of the date of the offense, but only after the assessment of a civil penalty become final, the violator pays a civil penalty, or a civil forfeiture is ordered by the court.

Three points will be assessed for any of the following violations: fishing in closed areas, fishing in closed areas with modified midwater gear, excess incidental catches, excess catch, non-compliance with minimum mesh size, fishing without a valid permit, and failure to submit logbook reports.

Two points will be assessed for any of the following: discarding groundfish; false statement to authorized officer; possession, shipment, or sale of illegally taken groundfish, impeding enforcement and boarding procedures; and transfer of fish to foreign processing vessels without a permit.

One point will be assessed for the following: fishing without a permit on board the vessel, failure to report permit information, improper vessel marking, and violations of other provisions of the regulations.

Leitzell noted that the offenses not listed in the proposed system, such as refusing to permit an authorized officer on board a vessel, assault on an officer, and otherwise resisting or interfering with an arrest or inspection are serious enough to cause immediate action to be taken against the permit, and will be handled under the present permit sanction regulations. Present procedures will also continue to be used to take action against foreign fishing permits.

Comments on the proposed point system should be sent to the NOAA Office of General Counsel (GCEL), Room 280-L, Page 1 Bldg., National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, Washington, DC 20235, by January 2, 1980.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting: Office of the Regional Director, Northeast Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, 14 Elm Street, Cloucester, Massachusetts 01930. Telephone (617) 281-3600.

BOATING

BOATING COURSES

Please include the following announcement in your publication concerning Boating Safety.

A 13 lesson Safe Boating course will be given at the Cold Spring Harbor High School, Turkey Lane, Cold Spring Harbor, on Tuesday nights, beginning January 8, 1980. The course will be given by Flotilla 22-3, United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

the course will include Boat Handling, Weather, Rules of the Road, Charts and Navigation, Marine Engines, Radio-Telephone procedure and Marlin Spike Seamanship.

Young Boatsmen, ages 10 to 16, can participate in a 3 lesson course in order to qualify for a license to operate a motor boat.

For information call: (516) 692-8790 or 271-8311.

*****

A 16 lesson course in Boating Skills and Seamanship sponsored by Flotilla 11-7 U.S.C.G. Auxiliary will be given at Gateway National Park-

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Floyd Bennett Field-Building 272. Course starts on February 25 at 8:00 p.m. For information call 998-6902 evenings, R. Kanowitz.

MARINE TOILET LAW WITH $2,000 FINE WILL BE ENFORCED

Most boatowners will be liable for a $2,000 fine as of Jan. 30, 1980 if they have a head that is not Coast Guard certified.

To clear up the confusion of this new federal law Shane's Marine in Island Park, Long Island, new York (516-431-0339) sponsored a seminar Saturday, December 1st, which was attended by more than 400 boatowners and dealers.

Among the speakers was Ensign James Corey of the U.S. Coast Guard and representatives from Danforth, ITT* Mansfield and Raritan. Ensign Corey after explaining that the law will be enforced by the Coast Guard, answered may questions from the very interested audience. The manufacturers then followed with description and installation instructions of their marine sanitation devices at their individual booths.

Shane's Marine did a very good job in helping to educate the public and is available now to answer any of your questions concerning problems you may have to adhering to this law.

BOATING COURSE STARTING JANUARY 9, 1980

The South Nassau Yacht Club will sponsor a 10 session Boating Safety and Seamanship class at the Bellmore Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, Royle St. Bellmore. Staring Jan. 9, 1980 at 8 p.m.

The Course is free. Instructional materials including Boating Manual, Training Charts, Plotting Protractor, and numerous booklets of interest will be provided at nominal cost.

Boat handling, chart reading, rules of the road, course plotting, radio communications, engine maintenance will be covered plus any other areas of student interest.

Further information can be obtained by calling Commodore Bill Raab at 781-7462 any evening after 7 p.m.

CLUB NEWS

SQUAW ISLAND FISHING CLUB "1980 SANITATION RULES"

All parties interested are invited to attend the Squaw Island Fishing Club's January 14, 1980 meeting.

Chief P.O. Wing of the Moriches Boating Safety Detachment 03-4 will speak on the "Latest Sanitation Laws effective 1980." After Mr. Wing's talk, he will entertain questions from the floor.

The time is 8:30 p.m. sharp at the Surfside 3 Lounge, foot of Wellwood Avenue, Lindenhurst.

GATEWAY STRIPER CLUB NEEDS NEW MEMBERS

The Gateway Striper Club takes pleasure in announcing that the results of its fall Nantucket outing were outstanding. Club members really "did in" the blues using Fingerprints tins, Rebels, and an occasional live eel.

We would like to announce at this time that our rolls are open for a few new members. Prior experience is not important; just the desire to get out and fish. We should mention for those interested that our members do not sell fish. Anyone wishing to join should come to one of our meetings which are held on the second Thursday of every month at 8 p.m. in Ft. Tilden, building 168.

Once again this year we expect to have visits by The Surfcaster, Danny of Danny Plug fame, as well as trips to Quincy, Nauset, Nantucket and Hatteras.

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NATIONAL SCENE

NEWS & NOTES ON THE WORLD OF FISHING
with Al Ristori

STRIPED BASS BILL PASSES

The striped bass legislation mentioned several times in this column during 1979 was signed into law as P.L. 96-118 on November 20. Credit for this breakthrough in getting Federal recognition of the striped bass problem must go to freshman Senator John Chafee (R-RI). It was Senator Chafee who first got concerned about the steady decrease in striped bass population levels and proposed appropriations within the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act for study of this situation. Previously, that act had been used almost exclusively for salmon programs.

Not only was the legislation passed, but the full $1,000,000 requested was appropriated for the first year of the study. The total three year authorization includes $4,700,000 for the striped bass program. However, compromise language worked out with the House Merchant Marine & Fisheries Committee resulted in the study being expanded to encompass striped bass populations throughout the country—rather than only those on the Atlantic coast. Since stripers are now being introduced to almost every body of water bigger than a mud puddle all over the country, it will be important to keep an eye on just how these funds are actually distributed.

According to the Sport Fishing Institute, an overall plan of action is to be developed prior to initiation of the study by a committee composed of representatives from the administering agencies (National Marine Fisheries Service and Fish & Wildlife Service), states, other non-federal parties representing a balance of both recreational and commercial fishing interests, and representatives from the citizens' advisory panel from the State-Federal Striped Bass Program.

The striped bass funds authorized are to be used solely for studies to investigate the status of striped bass populations and the factors responsible for their decline—and not to augment existing state projects related to that species. Furthermore, it is the intent of Congress that the states actively participate in the funding of specific projects with the federal matching share being 2/3.

Hopefully the passage of this striped bass legislation will get the State-Federal program moving once again. As I predicted a couple of years ago, there was little hope that a program requiring cooperation among all the states within the migratory range of the striped bass could succeed—and if it did, the time period involved would be such that the damage would already have been done. Unfortunately, nothing has happened in that program so far to convince me that my pessimism wasn't fully justified. However, with the infusion of Federal funds there may be more interest among the states in a program that will improve striped bass population levels even if some sacrifice is required from each state. This striped bass legislation became law in only eight months. Now if we could only get the states together on a program in the same sort of time frame we might have a chance of turning the present steady decline of the striper around within a few years.

STURGEON FAIL TO SHUT DOWN NUCLEAR PLANT

Attempts by anti-nuclear activists to shut down the Salem I generating station on the Delaware River, because two short-nosed sturgeon were found in the plant's water intake valves, were denied by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The short-nosed sturgeon is an endangered species and the anti-nuclear people figured they might have the same luck with them as other activists had with the snail darter in Tennessee. However, an investigation indicated that the sturgeon trapped in January 1978 had died before being sucked into the valve and that the second one (trapped in June 1978) was injured before being sucked in. The Salem I plant was closed down on April 3 for refueling, but has never started up since that time due to repeated technical problems. Though this attempt to shut down a plant for the loss of only two fish failed, it is nevertheless ironic that millions of stripers and weakfish have been killed over the years in the intakes of various power plants with hardly a protest from non-fishermen—simply because they aren't "endangered" and can't be used to accomplish a purpose that has nothing to do with the actual problem. Obviously, we need power—but that is no excuse for improperly designed intake systems that permit the destruction of untold numbers of young fish.

MEXICAN OIL SPILL DAMAGE MINIMAL

The Sport Fishing Institute reports that data collected by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department indicates that the environmental impact of oil spilled from the Mexican well in Campeche Bay has for the most part had a minimal impact on Texas fish and wildlife resources. The only worry so far is the possible effect on redfish larvae, and that is being followed up to determine if stocking will be necessary to offset losses.

GEORGES BANK LEASING PROCEEDS

Massachusetts state officials and commercial fishermen went all the way to the Supreme Court to prevent leasing of oil exploration areas on Georges Banks, but were finally rebuffed. With the area's nomination as a marine sanctuary dropped, and important spawning areas set aside, there was little justification left for prohibiting the drilling. Though the loss of trawling area will be insignificant, many fishermen fear that oil spills will result in destruction of the vast resources of the bank. Whether that could be the case is entirely speculation, but there is no basis for such an assumption based on the results of offshore drilling so far. Of course, drilling has never been conducted on such an important fishing site before, and close monitoring will be necessary in order to see that proper procedures are followed and clean-up operations instituted in prompt fashion. New England congressmen are pushing for legislation with additional safeguards for this sensitive area, but there doesn't seem to be much point in getting very excited over the exploratory drilling until it's determined if substantial reserves actually do exist. Though scientists are a little more enthused about the prospects for Georges Bank, it could turn out to be a dud—just as the Baltimore Canyon area has (except for natural gas, which still may not be sufficient for commercial exploitation).

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OLD TIMERS' CORNER WEAKFISHING

"The way it was..." with Matt Ahern

At one time or another, most of us have heard old-timers spin stirring tales of just how excellent weakfishing was in the long ago. It is my belief that those who haven't heard such stories have surely missed out on something. And I'm sure those who listened often wondered if all those pulse-pounding tales could possibly be true. You know the kind of stories I mean: where catches of a hundred or more tide-running weakfish—some reaching twelve pounds and better—were common; weakfish numerous as bergalls, etc., etc. Well, I'm here to tell you those stories (most of them, anyway) were indeed true. I fished through that golden period. I was in on those great days of superb weakfishing.

Let me begin by saying that at the time of this particular story, I was no longer a novice weakfisherman. I had been catching my share of weaks for a good many years. But one thing was lacking: I had never gone weakfishing "out east," that Mecca where, I had been told, the fishing was even better. I didn't know if this could possibly be so, for while most of my weakfish hunting had been confined to Jamaica Bay (Old-Timers' Corner, Issue #14, 1979), I was doing okay. However, those stories I did hear about "out east" weakfishing left me breathless....as such stories do when told to dedicated fishermen. Someday, I promised myself, come hell or high water, I was going to try it.

Fortunately, in this respect, I was well acquainted with a weakfish fanatic who knew just about all there was to know about the game at that time; but we had never fished together. His name was Ed Dein. He lived in Farmingdale and was a car inspector for the Long Island Rail Road.

While Ed enjoyed all kinds of angling, his one great love was weakfishing. No matter how good the flounder fishing or fluke fishing might be at the moment, if there was a chance to catch even one weakfish, Ed would spend all day trying to entice that lone fish. Every other fish could go hang—all he asked was a chance at the weaks. You can bet that those few times I fished with Ed Dein was an education. He was a fine sportsman; often kind and generous to a fault.

One day in early May, 1943, Ed got in touch with me. He told me he planned to spend two days weakfishing at Sag Harbor toward the end of the month, and did I want to go along. Did I! I jumped at the chance. I couldn't wait.

Ed knew I was due to go in the Army the following month, and as he had been all through the first World War with the Fighting 69th, he figured, I guess, that knowing what I was about to face, and not knowing when, or if, I'd ever get to go fishing again, he'd give me something to remember for a long time. And he sure did.

We had gas rationing during the war years, of course, and the allotment didn't allow much for recreational purposes (three gallons a week with an "A" card was what the average drive got). To drive to Sag Harbor was out of the question, so we decided to take the train. During the early-morning hours of Friday, May 28, I met Ed at Jamaica Station, where we boarded the steamer to Montauk. We were off on what proved to be one of the greatest fishing experiences of my life.

We left the train at Bridgehampton and took a cab to Sag Harbor. Ed left me to take care of the rowboat he had reserved (I believe the rowboat station was called "Healey's," but of that I am no longer certain), while he went about seeking an overnight boarding house. He joined me in a half hour, saying he had gotten a room for us for five bucks apiece—with breakfast and a box lunch thrown in for the next day. And this during wartime when everything was supposed to be outrageously priced!

I had bought three pounds of fresh local squid at the station (there was no such thing as frozen squid for fishermen those days), and in minutes I was putting my back to the oars while Ed rigged the tackle and prepared the bait. Our destination was to be about a quarter-mile out from the breakwater. Ed told me there was no special spot: just anchor up anywhere, he said, and the fish would come.

I hadn't paid much attention to Ed while he sat in the stern rigging our rods, because I knew the basic rig would be a 4/0 regular-shanked Sproat hook on a three-foot leader tied in about three feet above a suitable bank sinker, which turned out to be one of two ounces.

It was because of this lack of attention to Ed's doings that I was pleasantly surprised and more than elated when he handed me a newly-converted fencing foil rod, telling me it was my going away present. Ed, I'll never forget you. You were one fine gentleman. Incidentally, I had that rod for years until the day a two-legged skunk lifted it from my car at Captree.

As I took in the highlights of that finely balanced rod, I trembled with anticipation. I had been primed with tales of Sag Harbor weakfishing for years. Now, I was about to find out just how true those stories were—with the likes of a rod one seldom sees today. I guess you might say it takes another tackle "nut" to understand just how I felt at that moment.

Anyway, I weaved a three inch slice of squid on the hook, making allowances for the mandatory inch or so to trail in the current as an enticer, then dropped the rig overboard into about twenty to twenty-five feet of water, put the reel into gear when I felt the sinker strike bottom, reeled in the slack, and waited. But not for long.

Pow! I was hooked into my first "out east" weakfish.

Most of my previous weakfish had always been caught on the surface while drifting sandworm for bait, but there was no difference in the fight that followed. This fish battled just as hard on bottom and was just as strong as any I'd hooked in Jamaica Bay. Depth of water proved no deterrent and that fencing foil countered any devious trick the fish used to free itself of the hook, seeming always ready to sway the fish at the most crucial moments when the scrap could go one way or the other.

I asked Ed to net the fish, but it did me little good. He had his hands full with his own fish; so I quickly reached over, grabbed the net and slid it under the fish. An easy six pounds if it was an ounce.

"Let it go, Matt," Ed said, reaching for the net and sliding it under his own fish, a mate to the one I'd just caught. "We'll get bigger ones before the day's out." And he was right. There seemed to be no end to the action. Hit bottom and immediately a fish was on. It was wild fishing; one of the wildest I'd had until then and I'll never forget it.

We finished the first day with about seventy-five weaks which ran from three to nine pounds—and we didn't keep one! Every fish was carefully unhooked and returned. Even those with severely-torn jaws were given a chance. It was Ed's idea that Nature would take care of her own.

There were several reasons for returning those fish: not only did we expect to at least duplicate our catch the next day, but had we kept them, there was no way to keep those fish in prime condition overnight. But most important of all was the fact that just about every one of those fish was a spawn-laden female. I recall we also returned several big sea porgies and a sprinkling of fair-sized kingfish.

We could have stayed out longer that first day and caught more and more weakfish—no question about that, as those fish certainly were in a feeding frenzy. But we didn't. We were both pretty much pooped, what with the long train ride and being up just about all night. Enough, in this case, was certainly enough.

After supper that evening, we spent a few minutes looking over the sights of Sag Harbor, which, by the way, I often do today and in doing so, find nothing much has changed over the years. It is still the same quiet, beautiful village.

The next morning found us fishing before seven o'clock and we remained out there catching fish after fish with simple ease until a little past one. There was absolutely no end to the action. Down, up. Down, up. It was another banner day long to be remembered. We would have stayed out longer, I suppose, but there was a train to catch.

It was impossible to keep score, but I'm sure we caught close to one hundred fifty weakfish that day (maybe more), the largest being an eleven pounder (estimated weight) which Ed caught. This was okay with me. Who better deserved the largest weak of the day than that fine, gentle, unselfish fisherman?

As we had done on the previous day, we again returned all our fish as we caught them, holding out only a dozen or so of school size.

So ended my first experience with "out east" weakfishing.

I suppose now that you have read this you would be justified in believing we were just plain lucky; that we had hit upon two exceptionally good fishing days. But not so. That's the way it was on most days when a guy went weakfishing in that area. You can also add the Peconic Bay sector to that, too. It was just as good.

But sad to say, as good as that fishing was in those days, the handwriting was already on the wall.

I'm sure you've also heard stories about those long gone days when many of the fellows left their weakfish to rot on shore instead of putting them back to live, produce, and fight another day. These stories are also true. I get sick when I think of it.

When this madness started, I have no idea, but I do know that on our final day of that wonderful fishing trip, I saw evidence of it. When we pulled the rowboat on shore at the fishing station, we found the floorboards and seats of several vacated skiffs littered with dead and dying weaks. We returned those we could, but I doubt if they made it. Some of those discarded fish were well over ten pounds and all were full of ripe spawn. There must have been over a hundred dead fish. What a waste! What a crime against Nature!

(Continued on page 24.)

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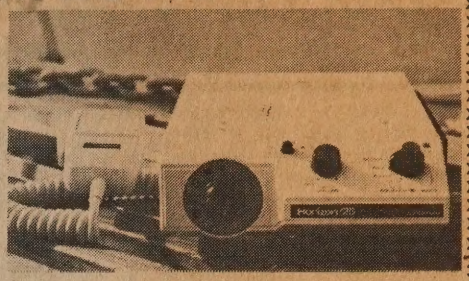

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FISH TALK with Dr. William A. Muller

SPRING RENEWAL

In the spring, a fisherman's heart turns to thoughts of fish. This paraphrase of the old adage is accurate enough and it reflects something of the psychology of fishing, as well as the facts of seasonal life. By the time the first spring flounder start stirring, our cabin fever has progressed from a chronic stage to the acute! We must be patient for three months or more every winter, and each day that passes brightens both our anticipation and our need for some time on the water. This is no accident, any more than the blending of fishless outings with blitzes is an accident. Perhaps, were it not for the lean days we would neither enjoy nor anticipate our fishing so fondly.

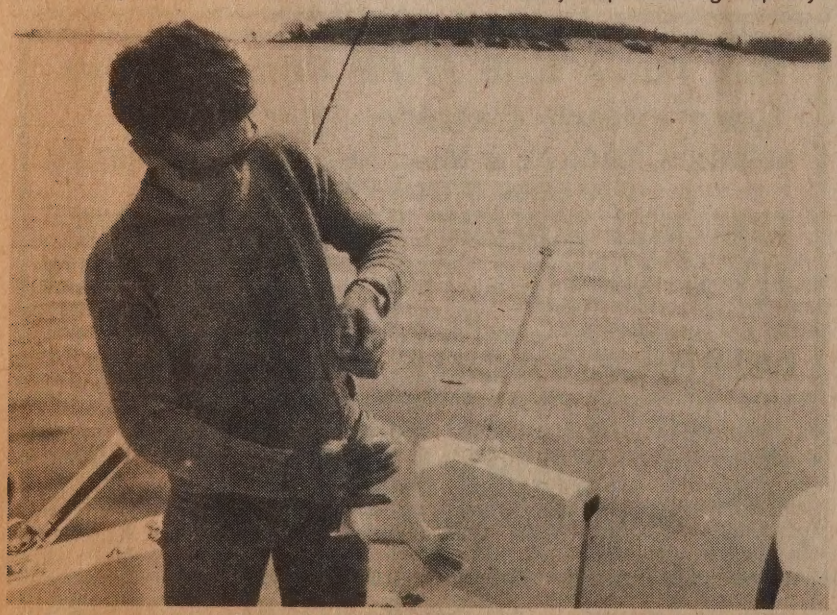
The spring renewal is no accident either. Man's perspective is developed from his own perch on the tree of life and so the coming of spring signifies the end of the most dreadful season of the year—the no-fishing season! Sure, we could brave the ice of winter and try for cod, and some folks do just that, but for many of us there is little appeal to snow, Ice, damp, cold, and rough seas. For us, the spring's the thing! When the first spring rush of flounder is over, we have spent the debilitating effects of cabin fever, and now make plans for the big Safaris against bass, blues, weaks, or tuna and marlin, if that's our passion.

Biologically, it's quite different! The human perspective is one thing, but biological events are another. Biological law lacks the passion that moves men and civilizations, but is relentless in its execution. Spring renewal is not just making the flowers bloom. Indeed, it is the spawning lust of the flounder, the inshore surge of the weakfish, the mass migration of bass, and much more. But the little creatures are perhaps more important than the great sea beasts that inspire us to fish. Yet their visual impact is almost non-existent because they are so small. The process begins in the fall when the water cools, migratory species leave, dissolved nutrient levels fall off sharply, and plants, such as seaweeds and marsh grasses die; their remains settling onto the sediment where microorganisms immediately begin the process of decay. In spite of the fact that the water is cold in winter thus reducing the level of biological activity, the bacteria, fungi, and yeasts slowly but relentlessly decay these once-live creatures converting them into dissolved inorganic chemicals, dissolved and suspended organic substances, and new rich additions to the sediment. Thus, the levels of nutrients in the water column gradually rise through the winter and the melting snow and spring rain runs off the land, carrying more nutrients into the bays, sounds, and the coastal ocean. Spring runoff is the final push, combined with warming water, that gives impetus to the spring renewal. By late winter or early spring, the microscopic algae are already reproducing rapidly: "blooming" as the marine biologist would say.

The "bloom" of microscopic algae must come early because a few more steps in the food chain must be completed before the bigger fish can enter the scene. The microscopic algae represents an important beginning since they will be the food for hatching multitudes of tiny invertebrate animals such as amphipods, copepods, shrimp, and others. As the numbers of tiny animals increases markedly, the size of the algae bloom diminishes since the small animals eat their way through the floating gardens and the plants themselves begin to exhaust the once endless supply of nutrients. If it were true that the nutrients did indeed exist in endless supply, the sea would swell with algae and small animals, choking it and denying life its normal cycle. For everything there is a season, teaches Ecclesiastes, and by mid-spring the algae have exerted the peak of their influence and are waning.

Nature's timing, having had the benefit of 3.3 billion years of evolution, is flawless. The coastal species begin to invade the inshore grounds, either from offshore retreats or via northward migrations, and their arrival coincides with the "bloom" of small animals and the arrival of migrating baitfish such as mackerel, bunker, herring, butterfish, and the inshore movement of sand eels. Thus, there will be ample food for post-spawning of adult game fish and also vast clouds of tiny invertebrates for their newly-hatched fry. The migrating baitfish arrive with good timing as well, for many of them are plankton eaters too, and the bloom of tiny animals is just the right menu. Other small fish like mackerel, are fish eaters and will dine on sand eels, spearing, and fish fry.

Newly-hatched fish, whether they were spawned from killie parents or mighty game fish, will feast on copepods, or something similar, when they have absorbed the yolk-rich sack remnant of the egg from which they feed during the first few days out of the egg. Many of them will not survive beyond the first few minutes or hours of life because during the first days they become fodder for larger fish; perhaps sand eels themselves, preyed upon so heavily by so many predators, will find brief justice in the role of predator against the young of such mighty warriors as weakfish, pollack, bluefish, or cod. Within a few days, however, the young fish swim with greater authority and have adjusted to their habitat. They may hide now among rafts of algae, against the



On the northeast coast, spring renewal means that flounder flood into the shallows to spawn and feed heavily on worms and crustacean blooms.

mud banks, or in the eel grass beds. Predation against the young predators declines sharply as they learn to apply the cunning so well evolved in their species. Still, of the tens of thousands and maybe even millions of fry hatched from a single pair of parents, it is unlikely that more than one, two, or three will survive to sexual maturity. Predation is not the only factor in their demise; there is starvation and disease, which destroy millions.

By early summer, the hordes of tiny invertebrate animals have surrendered their moment. They have eaten their way through much of the algal bloom and have been victims of tremendous predation pressure for some time. The summer is the time for young of the year baitfish to grow, and along with them, the faster growing young predators. Early in the summer, the young of the year baitfish and game fish, many species of which spawn on or about the same time, are about the same size. They may swim together and eat together, demonstrating nothing of the prey/predator relationship that will exist later when the young game fish outgrows its smaller relative. Thus, by the end of summer and early fall, the tables are turned. Copepods and other small animals can no longer support the expanding appetite of the game fish and their feeding habits change. Spearing, killies, anchovies, tinker mackerel, and small bunkers become standard dietary items. Ironically, the young of the year game fish find themselves to be preyed upon by their larger cousins. Thus, as fall wanes and young weaks, blues, fluke, and others begin their pre-winter migration, the attrition in their numbers increases dramatically. The migrating young of the year fish find that the open ocean affords them few places to hide and that predators from blues to tuna are waiting for the feast. Most species hope to avoid extinction through the fortune of sheer numbers and inevitably some young of the year escape to become the parents of the next generation.

It is true that the most abundant species experience the greatest attrition simply because such abundancy warrants increased attention. Still, what seems like an unbalanced predatory cycle actually helps to maintain the balance and diversity of life. Baitfish species that may be in the down part of a normal up and down cycle of abundance become only occasional predatory targets simply because the attention of the game fish is pre-occupied by hordes of another species currently at the peak of abundance. Such may be happening now with sand eels, which have recently been so abundant that many predators are focused on them. Thus, other species may escape heavy predation, filtering through migratory staging areas with each new tide in small, unobtrusive clusters. The picture may change 180° in the years ahead and those species currently experiencing high predation may be the beneficiaries of depressed abundance.

Note the butterfish laying next to the cutting board on the right side of this photo. Healthy plankton blooms mean plenty of food for small fish such as butterfish, herring, bunker, and sand eels which, in turn, are preyed upon by bass and blues later in the season. Photo by Peter Vasilas.

When fall fades into the dank unmerciful grey of winter, the cycle of seasonal succession has come full circle and the once lush grasses are decaying again. One must superimpose upon all of this biological turnover the effects of physical, chemical, and geological events, which express their own cycles over the decades and centuries. Sunspot cycles, modifications in climate, major geological catastrophes, floods, hurricanes, unusual ocean upwellings, and shifts in ocean currents are just some of the unexpected events that can short circuit even the best made plans of fish and men.

Today, scientists are actively seeking a better understanding of how meteorological, geologic, biological, chemical, and astrological cycles interdigitate so that we will be in a better position to predict harvest allowances and stabilize ocean fish stocks. This will not be a simple or quick process because the subtleties are in many ways overwhelming, but that does not mean that the task is an impossible one. Quite the contrary! In fact, great strides have already been made since the implementation of the 200-Mile Limit in 1977. It is a question of the development and application of technology, a process that Twentieth Century man has found most useful.

When all was finally said and done, the 1979 season provided little reprieve for Long Island surfmen who have already suffered through several consecutive poor seasons. Some individuals may disagree with this point, but I'll bet there aren't very many of them. Some areas had better fishing than others—as will always be the case; but few spots enjoyed any amount of consistency. If you spent most of your time in pursuit of striped bass, the odds are that you suffered through many fishless nights. Despite the overall poor fishing, there were some bright spots that emerged through it all. On both the north and south shore, there were a surprising number of school bass in evidence, considering the state of

1979 SURF REVIEW

the fishery. In all likelihood, these fish are the result of fair to good year classes being turned out by the Hudson over the past three years. The extreme western portion of the Sound apparently enjoyed fairly steady action with the schoolies throughout most of the season according to reports we received.

At Montauk, the rocks under the light again became a source of anticipation for many late night surfmen. While the fishing still rated as poor compared to years past, one at least felt as though there was a good chance for some kind of action to make the trek eastward worthwhile. For myself, sixteen nights of fishing under the light, from late September until well into November, resulted in just three trips drawing no action at all; and if some of the trips consisted of merely dropping good fish (which they did), I'll settle for the same kind of action in 1980.

A good run of weakfish kept casters busy around south shore inlets during May and June, picking up the slack left by the bass. There were some good flurries of bluefish and weakfish activity along north shore beaches and some king size choppers taken on bait around harbor areas. Let's start rolling through the year and I'll try to pick out some of the high and low points as they occurred.

When we began our reports in early March, the only action of interest to surfcasters was at the Northport Power Plant. School bass were being picked away at for most of the month on worms, bucktails, Tri-Fin Eel Worms, Whiptails and small Rebels. Late in the month, short bass were being taken on worm baits meant for flounder at Glover Street on Staten Island.

Early April witnessed fish from the Lilco plant spreading out along the beach at Crab Meadow. A few went to 15 lbs. Fishing appeared to be pretty good through the entire month. Ronnie's Bait and Tackle in Huntington reported a catch of ten bass from three to six pounds for John Munno, Jr. and Mark Rinaldo on the night of the fourteenth. They were taken on worms at the power plant. On April 20, an eight pound bass came from Cold Spring Harbor—the first non-winter-over fish from the area.

By the end of the month, school bass were being taken at Staten Island, Turtle Cove near City Island, and there were rumors of a couple of bass from the beach at Southampton. Point Lookout and Atlantic Beach produced a few fish as well. Sandworms were the ticket at each location. The last week of April produced the first cow bass of the season: a thirty-seven pounder for John Munno, Jr. The big striper was taken on a small mackerel Rebel along the Lloyd's Neck Causeway shore.

As we entered May, weakfish began providing action in the Shinnecock Canal and along the banks of the State Channel at Captree. Some tiderunners up to thirteen pounds on jellyworms at the latter location. Small stripers spread along the beach from Rocky Point to Wading River. By mid-month, Stan at Rocky Point Fishing Stop called it "the best run of small bass in many a year." Most fish went from shorts, up to four pounds. A steady pick of bass and a few weaks along the Cold Spring Harbor shore since Munno's big one. The week of the twentieth saw this fishing really bust loose and quite a few stripers in the twenty to thirty-five pound class along with weaks up to ten pounds were weighed in. The hot combination was a four-and-a-half inch Rebel with a white feather dropper, rigged a couple of feet ahead of the plug. Sixty to seventy percent of the fish were being caught on the droppers. A good showing of weaks and small blues along north shore beaches by Caumsett State Park, Diamond Pt., and Rocky Point among the productive spots. Some nice bass and blues began to put in an appearance at Staten Island by this time also. Diving Danny Swimmers worked on the fish.

Weaks, blues and a few bass provided action for casters along the north shore in June. A few big stripers were taken along south shore beaches and a couple of impressive scores racked up by locals fishing eels in the vicinity of Shelter Island. One caster had four cows up to fifty-five pounds here the first week of the month. Weakfish, small blues and a few nice bass made a good showing during the early part of the month on the backside of Fire Island Inlet. Whiptail/dropper combos accounted for some fine scores.

The grapevine reported weaks on the inside of Jones Inlet also. Through most of the month, the north shore remained the place to be. Weakfishing got hot for awhile at Diamond Point and Sand City for casters using tin, Eelworms, and diamond head-jellyworm combinations.

Near the end of June, "bluefishing of blitz proportions" along the beach near Rocky Point. Catches ranging upwards of twenty-five fish per man were not unheard of. Most of the choppers were in the two to five pound class and a few weaks were mixed in. Staten Island continued to produce bass in the twenty pound class on plugs.

July was quiet around most parts of the Island, although the north shore did manage to produce some good action at a couple of locations. Hagerman's Landing enjoyed very good bluefishing throughout most of the month; tin accounting for fish until dark, when Rebels took over. An excellent run of weakfish from eight to twelve pounds developed along the beach at Asharoken during the latter part of the month. Best fishing occurred from dark until midnight. Rebels and Eelworms were the hot lures. There were a few flurries of bluefish action along south shore and east end beaches, but the fishing was spotty at best. Montauk has been quiet up to this point in the season. Few casters even trying due to the gas shortage and the lack of reports from this area. A few weaks at Gin Beach on RedFins as July melted into August.

Hot, muggy weather greeted the Island early in the month. And as is usually the case in August, surf fishing went from slow to slower in most areas. While small bass continued to be caught in Turtle Cove at City Island, the fine run of weaks along Asharoken fizzled. Blues kept casters busy at Hagerman's Landing and a couple of bass from twenty to forty pounds taken on sandworms along eastern Sound beaches. Some big stripers fell to eels at Tobay and a fifty came out of the wash at Gilgo. Bob Sichler checked this cow in at The Store at Oak Beach.

A northeaster that surprised everyone around mid-month, did little to change the surf scene. Montauk did witness some flurries of small blues on the south side and weakfish entertained casters up front for a couple of nights. Blues from six to thirteen pounds were clobbering tins, swimming plugs, and bait in the Staten Island area round the third week of August, according to a report filed by Lenny of Santo's Sport Shop. That good run of blues in the Rocky Point area collapsed with the

passing of the big storm.

Most of the reports late in the month spoke only of inconsistent flurries of action with bluefish. No real steady action anywhere and bass news almost non-existent. City Island continued to be an exception, although many of the stripers being taken at Orchard Beach and Turtle Cove were shorts.

As September came upon us, so, too, were we greeted by Tropical Storm David. The Point Lookout and Long Beach surf seemed to benefit as there was a flurry of bass and blue activity on eels and plugs. Also, some big blues were taken on bunker chunks from the City Island Bridge. North shore beaches to the east were also the scene of some bluefish action.

As we got into the heart of September, most surf action still involved bluefish. Choppers put in appearances at Montauk, Southampton, Democrat Point, Atlantic Beach and Staten Island. Blues were also spread along north shore beaches with some slammers taking bunker chunks around the harbors.

September went out on a positive note as Montauk finally witnessed some steady action with bass, weaks and blues. An easterly blow prompted some bass activity at Southampton and Shinnecock. The National Seashore property, west of Smith's Point, provided similar action. Big blues roamed Reynold's Channel and every now and then put in an appearance at Magnolia Pier. Good bluefishing again, in the Rocky Point area.

October blew in with a good dose of wind that eventually put the damper on some fine action at Montauk and wherever else bass, weaks, and blues had begun to make their presence felt.

Towards the middle of the month, Montauk came back to life and quite a few bass up to forty-eight pounds graced the scale at Johnny's Tackle Shop. Wally Wolpert of the Buoy 2 Sport Shop, found a pair of stripers in the twenty pound class at Cedar Beach (south shore), but bass fishing in this area never did get off the ground. A few big bass, blues, and weaks, with a penchant for Atom and Danny swimming plugs, kept casters in the Staten Island surf occupied through the third week of the month. School bass were scattered along many parts of the north shore and some big blues were taken on bait at Horton's Point.

October left us with a pick of medium to big stripers at Montauk. Action being after dark on the usual darters and bottle plugs. Nice blues in the suds at field #3, Robert Moses for a day, but that was about the extent of the action. Normally a late season producer, field #3 never did get going this fall. West End Jones Beach did show some life with bass and blues and the north fork continued to produce some blues and a few bass.

With balmy temperatures for much of November, many casters anxiously waited for the surf to break loose. It never did happen. Bass were picked from Montauk's boulder-strewn shore through the entire month, and east end sand beaches were the scene of sporadic action with blues, weaks, and a few bass. Good fishing was rarely repeated the following day. Staten Island did develop a good run of school bass with nearly all of the fish falling to sandworms. City Island played host to lots of small bass, as it did for most of the season. Small Rebels, bucktails, and worms were the ticket here.

It was left to Joe Sanfratello of Islip to end the season on a positive note. While many surfcasters were off in the woods looking to fulfill their quest for venison, Joe slipped out on North Bar and beached one of the largest stripers to come out of the Long Island surf in recent years. The sixty-one pounder fell for a yellow darter on November 23.

Nothing like ending the season with a bang!

BAY FISHING: Inshore Fishing Machines

(Continued from page 14.)

of a warranty; no small matter considering the cost of repairs these days. A big plus when buying used boats is that many are already equipped with items that should be standard equipment on an inshore machine. This is a blessing because radios, antennas, rod racks, recorders, and pumps can add up to a bundle of money in a hurry.

Hopefully, I've touched upon most of the topics of concern to those in the market for a craft with which to pursue our inshore game fish. Think hard before committing yourself, and ask advice of those with more experience. Hopefully, your selection will result in a craft that will be a source of pleasure in your pursuit of "man's favorite sport."

Next week's topic will cover the equipment that makes an inshore fishing machine functional.

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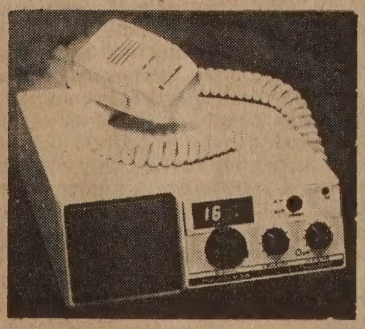

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INSHORE FISHING MACHINES

Every inshore angler has his own idea of the ideal fishing craft. Some entertain visions of sleek, high-powered, glass machines with price tags equivalent to buying a second home. Others find their needs satisfied by smaller, economical "tin boats." Not very fancy; but for some, they do a yeoman job. The point I'm trying to make, is that no one boat will satisfy the whims of every angler looking for a craft with which to ply the Island's bays and inlets. The prospective buyer has many factors to take into consideration. They will vary according to individual needs and desires. What we will try to do here is discuss some of the considerations to be dealt with when searching for a suitable fishing craft. More of an attempt to steer you in the right direction, rather than trying to select the ideal fishing boat. For many of us, the primary consideration to be reckoned with is the cost. Know what kind of price range you can handle before doing any serious looking around. Don't forget that being able to afford a boat goes far beyond the initial cost. Fuel consumption, dockage, hauling, storage, maintenance and repairs should all be considered when trying to decide on the affordability of a particular craft. Once you have decided on what you can spend initially, as well as afford to run and maintain, you can start thinking about satisfying other requirements.

How big a boat do you need? That can depend on several factors. Will most of your fishing be done well back in the bays or will you be spending a lot of time near the inlets and along south shore beaches? In most cases, I don't think it is necessary for anyone who will spend most of their time inshore to go much larger than the twenty-three foot range. Such craft are more than ample for that occasional offshore foray providing you use good judgement in picking your days. Fishermen who practice most of their sport in the relatively sheltered west end bays can get by fine with boats in the sixteen to eighteen foot category. Those who intend to run around the more open expanse of Great South Bay may find a little more solace in boats running nineteen to twenty-one feet in length. Center console craft in this size range continue to dominate the inshore scene. Mako, Aquasport, Sea Craft, Grady White, Hydra-Sport and Boston Whaler comprise the bulk of these fishing machines. They are roomy, fast, seaworthy, and designed with the express purpose of performing as efficient fishing platforms.

When trying to decide on the size and type of boat that is suitable for your needs, take into consideration not only where most of your fishing will be done, but also the type of angling you do. Someone who works the white water of inlet bars would obviously like more boat under them than someone who is predominantly a sinker bouncer. A striper hound likes some speed which enables him to hit several different spots in the course of a tide or make the maximum number of passes through a productive rip. Casters should consider either center consoles or boats with large, open cockpits.

For some, fishing machines must double as the family yacht, in which case some kind of shelter is a major consideration. Quite a few craft are on the market that are designed with a cuddy cabin up forward and plenty of uncluttered cockpit space. A couple of manufacturers—Grady White and Mako in particular—offer walkaround cabin models which provide both the protection and comfort of a cuddy as well as the 360° fishability of a center console. They are designed primarily with fishing in mind, yet have that little extra to keep the lady happy. Shelter from the sun and foul weather; an enclosed head; a place to change, and while it's not the Hilton, a place to roll out the sleeping bag when spending a night or two over at the beach.

Outboards far outnumber inboards or I/Os in our waters. Many miles of flats and shallows are among the reasons that most prefer this type of propulsion. Running aground with an inboard can be an expensive proposition by the time wheel, shaft, and rudder repair and hauling costs are tallied. No one is immune to being sand-borne either. A slight miscalculation while running in the black of night or in a shroud of fog has prompted many experienced boatmen to dredge new channels across some of the flats that make up a good portion of our south shore bays. Outboards also make for ease in trailering and this leads to another topic.

Are you considering a trailerable rig or one that would be better off left in a berth? While dockage may be convenient in that your boat is always in the water waiting for you, there are a number of positive aspects to trailering. Since the major function of your craft is as a fishing machine, you're at an obvious advantage if you trailer. The mobility created by trailering enables you to chase spring run weakfish on the Heckscher flats; west end stripers in June, and Moriches fluke in July. If a good run of fish develops at Montauk or at Eaton's Neck, you have the ability to hook up and be where the fish are in as long as it takes you to drive there. Some other factors to consider: dockage rates are high due to rapidly increasing costs in operating marinas and also the old law of supply and demand. Two seasons of dock fees will, in most cases, buy you a trailer that should provide many good years of use. Also, finding an available slip, if you do want one, is not always an easy task. Long Island plays second fiddle to no other place when it comes to boating and the number of crafts increase each year. The gas crunch of '79 did, however, seem to curb this trend. Having a boat sitting home on a trailer means that you can keep it at the ready and avoid a lot of time spent loading and unloading gear. Maintenance and repairs are more easily accomplished when the craft is conveniently parked at your home. It will probably stay a lot prettier, too, than if it spends the season in and around the brine twenty-four hours a day. There are a couple of negative aspects to consider with trailering. There will be some minor cost for registration and maintenance and it is one more piece of equipment that must be looked after. The major inconvenience, particularly if most of your fishing is done on weekends, is the waiting associated with some of the more popular ramps when launching or recovering. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, many townships restrict ramp use to residents. In some cases, non-residents may purchase a season pass or pay a daily fee. At some east end ramps, a five dollar charge is the going rate.

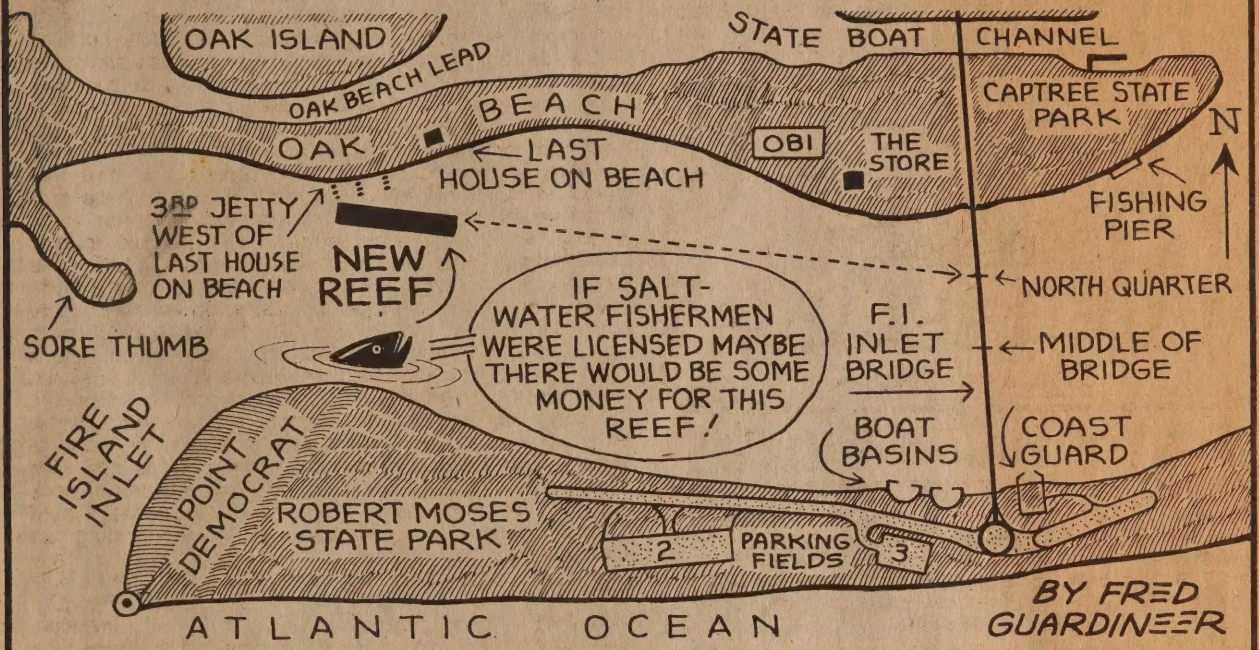
When considering boat construction, your choices are limited by the overwhelming number of Fiberglas craft around. They are easily maintained, take a lot of abuse, and can be kept looking like new with nothing more than a coat of wax at the start of each season. There are some popular aluminum models around which take even more abuse and require less maintenance than glass hulls, but lack the beauty and luster of glass. Unless you consider working on a wood hull a labor of love, stay away from such craft. While there are some good arguments for wood, the average angler does not want to be bothered with the added expense of maintaining a wood boat, nor does he or she want to spend precious time sanding, caulking, or painting. Also, with wood, rot is an ever-present concern, particularly since most of these boats have been around for a good many years.

The question of buying a new or used craft is often settled by the difference in cost. If money is no obstacle, then a new boat affords you the luxury of selecting the options you desire. It also provides you with the comfort

(Continued on page 13.)

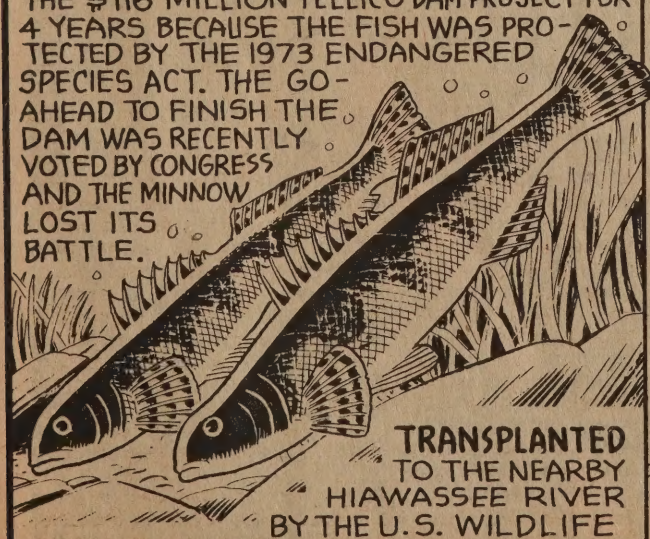
A NEW L.I. FISHING REEF

A NEW GREAT SOUTH BAY INSHORE ARTIFICIAL FISHING REEF HAS BEEN STARTED IN THE DEEP WATER ALONG THE OAK BEACH CHANNEL BY THE SINKING OF A 100 FT. BARGE. THE PROJECTED REEF AREA IS 1500 FT. LONG BY 300 FT. WIDE STARTING AT THE 3RD JETTY WEST OF THE LAST HOUSE AND 200 FT. FROM SHORE POINTING EAST TOWARD THE NORTH QUARTER OF THE FIRE ISLAND INLET BRIDGE.



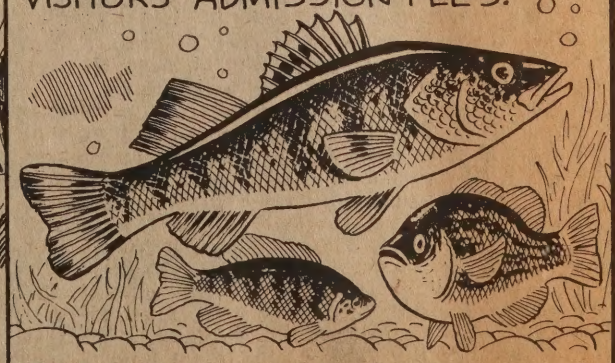
BIOLOGIST CHET ZAWACKI OF THE N.Y. STATE DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION IS IN CHARGE OF THIS PROJECT WHICH WILL NEED ADDITIONAL OLD BOATS, BARGES AND RUBBLE - *ALL DONATED AS THE STATE HAS NO MONEY EARMARKED FOR THIS WORK.* OTHER ARTIFICIAL REEFS IN THE AREA, INSHORE AT KISMET AND OFFSHORE OF THE LIGHTHOUSE PROVIDE GOOD FISHING AND ARE HOME TO AT LEAST 25 COMMON SPECIES WITH BLACKFISH, SEABASS AND PORGIES THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER.

THE SNAIL DARTER, A FINGER-SIZE SPECIE OF PERCH NATIVE TO THE *LITTLE TENNESSEE RIVER*, BLOCKED COMPLETION OF THE $116 MILLION TELLICO DAM PROJECT FOR 4 YEARS BECAUSE THE FISH WAS PROTECTED BY THE 1973 ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT. THE GO-AHEAD TO FINISH THE DAM WAS RECENTLY VOTED BY CONGRESS AND THE MINNOW LOST ITS BATTLE.



TRANSPLANTED TO THE NEARBY HIAWASSEE RIVER BY THE U.S. WILDLIFE SERVICE, THE SNAIL DARTER POPULATION IS SO FAR DOING WELL IN ITS NEW HOME.

THE COLD SPRING HARBOR FISH HATCHERY, A HISTORIC L.I. LANDMARK IS NOW THE "*COLD SPRING HARBOR FISHERIES INFORMATION CENTER.*" FROM FORMALLY PRODUCING 100,000 TROUT ANNUALLY, THE FACILITY WILL NOW DISPLAY FRESHWATER FISH OF BOTH COLD AND WARMWATER SPECIES. IT WILL BE SUPPORTED BY VISITORS' ADMISSION FEES.



BEST FISHING DAYS FOR JANUARY WHEN THE MOON IS BETWEEN *NEW* AND *FULL* ARE JAN. 17-30

BASIC ROD BUILDING

by Pete Barrett

-PART ONE-

REEL SEATS & GRIPS

Building custom fishing rods gains in popularity with each passing winter. Most every tackle shop now carries at least a "bare bones" selection of rod blanks, grips, wrapping thread, guides and accessory rod building components; and there are many shops that now specialize in rod building and even provide instruction classes, books, free advice and years of background experience.

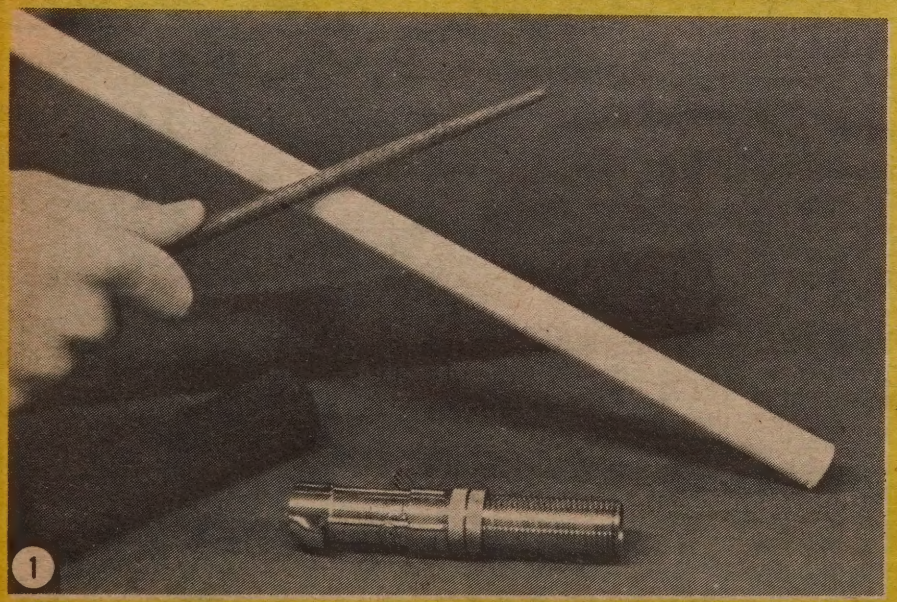
We have covered rod building for several years with in-depth articles on how to select blanks and the other parts needed to complete a rod. At that time there weren't as many shops with such readily available information. That has changed dramatically, and so this winter we offer the basics of rod building to our readers as a starting point to whet your appetite to try your hand at building your own custom stick, and for readers who may wish to simply rebuild an old rod that has become a favorite, if somewhat worn, fishing companion.

We heartily recommend that for more specific instruction you head for your nearest tackle shop for help and recommendations in selecting the exact rod you wish to build. There are literally hundreds of blanks to choose from, where only a half dozen years ago there were only dozens. Numerous guide choices, modern space-age grip materials, and newer and better threads. The local tackle shop in your fishing area is best equipped to give specific blank recommendations and a listing of components that will result in a rod designed for the fishing you enjoy the most.

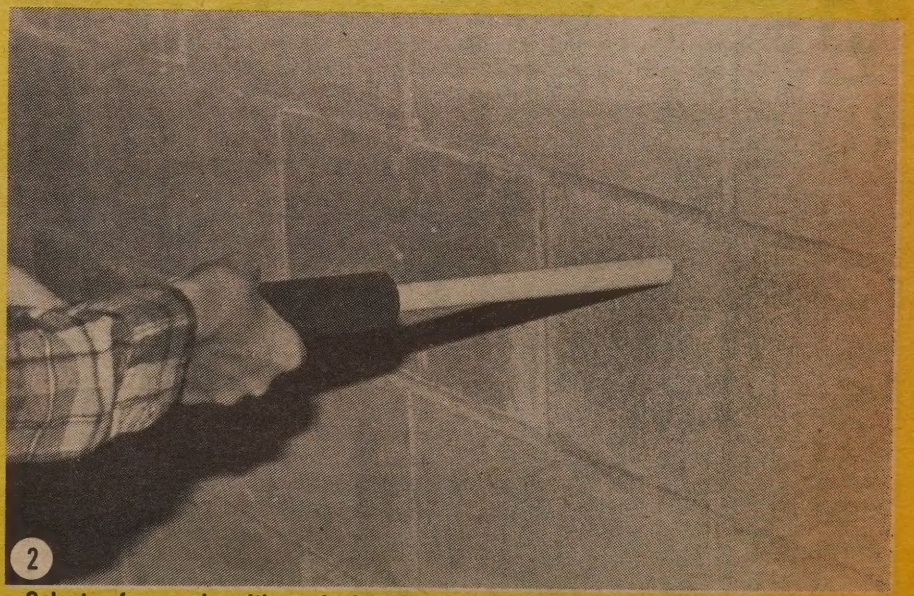
There are at least two excellent books available at bookstores and tackle shops which will help you maneuver over the bumpy spots and problem areas. Dale Clemens' "Fiberglass Rod Making," published by Winchester Press (available through The Fisherman) was the first book to treat the subject with any clarity. It is still a good book. A smaller book, but which I believe is the best instruction manual available anywhere is published by Windward Publishing Co. and written by one of the most knowledgeable and respected custom rod crafters today. John Emery doesn't just build rods—he fishes them and knows what he is doing. If you can't find his book, "How to Build Custom-Made Handcrafted Fishing Rods" in a bookstore, you can order it from Windward at 105 N.E. 25th St., P.O. Box 371005, Miami, Fl. 33137.

★ NEXT WEEK ★

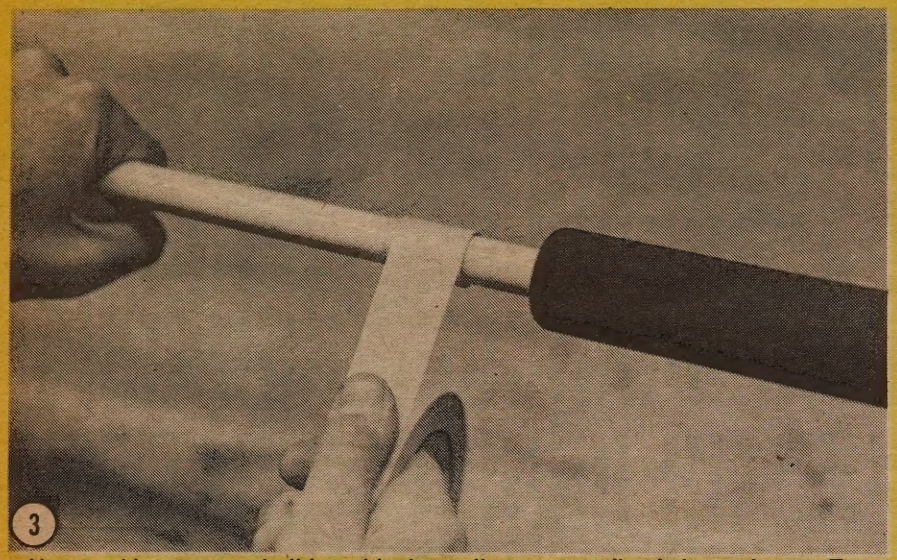
How to Underwrap & Select Guide Placement



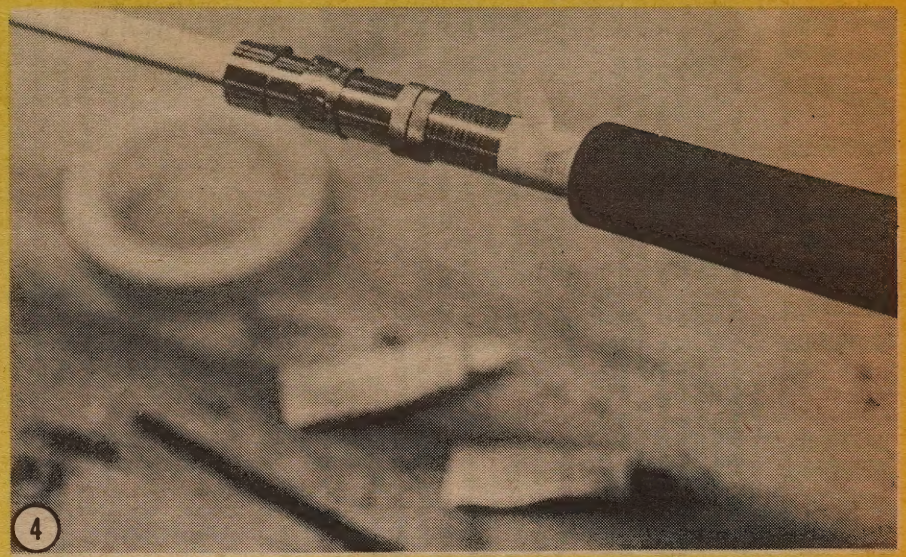
Before gluing grips and reel seat in place, rough up the surface of the blank to provide a better bonding surface for the epoxy glue to grab onto.



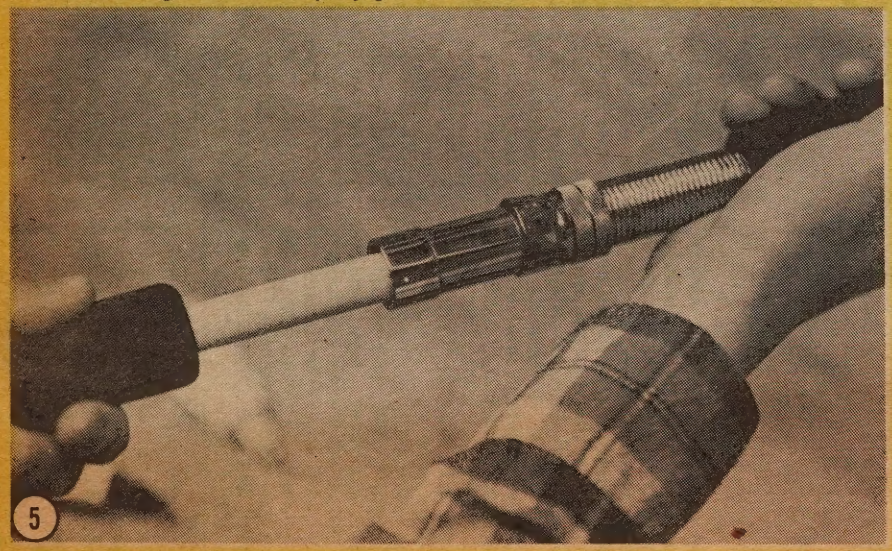
Select a foam grip with an inside diameter hole that slides on the blank until becoming snug about 18" from the desired finished position. Smear blank with epoxy and push grip into place. Lean against a wall for maximum push.



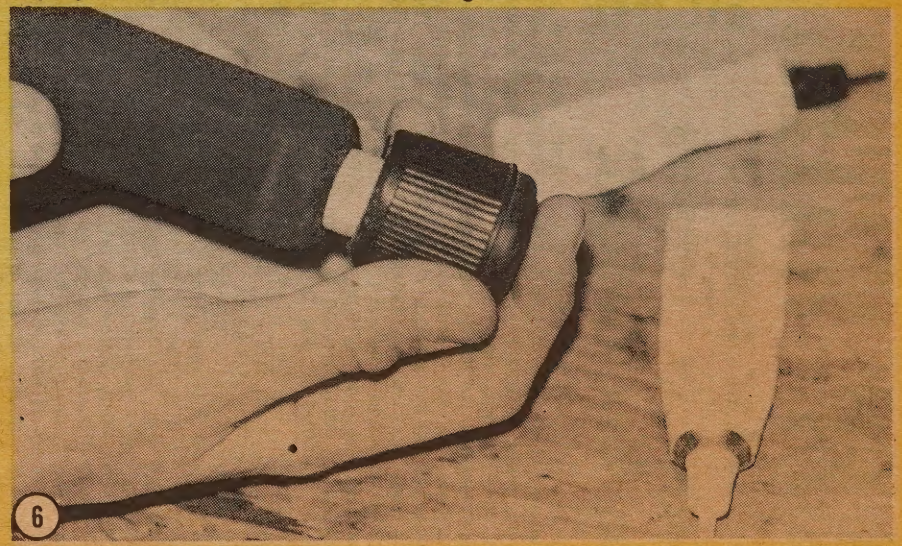
Use masking tape to build up blank to allow a snug fit of the reel seat. Two shim wraps of tape about an inch from each end of the reel seat hold the seat in correct alignment until epoxy glue dries.



Smear blank with a heavy coating of epoxy and slide reel seat into place. A wrap of masking tape at the end of the seat allows easy removal of any excess epoxy. Acetone will also clean an excess glue.



Slide on fore grip after smearing a coating of epoxy on the blank. Push into position tightly against reel seat. Clean any excess epoxy from grip or seat with Acetone.



Glue butt cap in place with epoxy. Masking tape will serve as shim if diameter of cap is too large for blank diameter.

DEEP WATER COD JIGGING

—PART THREE—
Lines & Teasers
by Ken Gerhardt

ED'S NOTE: All components mentioned in the first two parts and the remainder of this series, can be obtained in your local tackle shops here on Long Island. The Newell line of reels mentioned are carried by: Hook, Line & Sinker, Freeport (516) 623-2522; Merrick Tackle, Bellmore (516) 781-7766; Lon Wanser Bait & Tackle, Seaford (516) SU 5-1138; B&B Tackle, Center Moriches (516) 878-9640. (If other shops carry Newell, we are unaware of them.)

Up to now we've talked about the rod and reel for deep jigging for cod; now let's discuss lines of various types, brands, etc.

What's needed for deep jigging 150' and over is a line that is strong (50# test), but not too strong. If 80# or 100# test is used, it becomes almost impossible to break it if one gets hung up. Another perhaps even more important consideration is the very large diameter of 80# or over test. When fast currents or a fast drift combines with 200' or more depths, the large diameter line balloons out more due to the added lift from its large diameter. This can be overcome to a degree by using larger, heavier jigs. The heavier jigs can, however be counter-productive, as twenty-six to thirty ounce jigs are very, very heavy towards the end of the dav. After a certain weight, no additional amount of weight will get the jig straight down, as an engineering "force" triangle is set up where lift equals downward force.

Another very desirable feature is lack of stretch. The more stretch that is inherent in a line, the better the chance of missing a fish. There can be as much as forty feet of stretch in some mono lines 200' feet long. This makes it very difficult to feel a fish, much less hook it. The Dacrons offer very limited stretch, but some have other undesirable features such as poor abrasion resistance, large diameter, etc.

Another consideration is abrasion resistance. If a line has no stretch but abraids easily, it loses its appeal almost as fast as it loses its first fish. The monofilament lines are the most abrasion resistant, with the braided monos the least. There are, of course, a number of lines somewhere in-between.

So to summarize, we need a line which is strong (50#), has a relatively small diameter, has limited stretch, has good abrasion resistance and has that intangible quality of "fishing well." Unfortunately, no one line has excellence in all these categories, but one (a new arrival) has more than all the others.

Let's examine a number of familiar lines and see how they stack up to our ideal and to some degree, to each other.

Monofilaments. First on the list is the old favorite and probably best known: Ande. The fifty pound test mikes out at .030" diameter and tests out at 50#. It has a lot of stretch, but most of the people who use Ande line are used to it and compensate for this. It fishes well and has high abrasion resistance. Its cost is reasonable and it is available just about everywhere.

Next is the new Berkley Trilene XT monofilament in the forty pound weight. It mikes out at .030" diameter and it tests out at roughly the same as the Ande 50#. Why Berkley labels it 40#, who knows? It has somewhat less stretch than the Ande and its abrasion resistance is quite high. It is roughly competitive with Ande, but not so widely distributed.

Web, a braided monofilament line has less stretch than the normal mono line, but since it is made up of a multiplicity of very fine mono threads any of these which break due to abrasion progressively weaken the breaking strength of the line. This line has good application in casting around areas that are open water. Its abrasion resistance is not good enough to consider as a deep jigging line.

Next are the Dacrons. These lines offer far less stretch than the monos, but their larger diameter requires a heavier jig to hold bottom. Due to this balloon effect, it does not fish as well as Ande. There are a number of manufacturers of Dacron lines: Ashaway, Cortland, Garcia, Gudebrod, etc. Perhaps the best known and widely used is Cortland's Micron. Micron is not a round line, but a flat, hollow braid, as are the others, so it has two dimensions: in the case of 50# Micron, .020"x.030". Dacron has less abrasion resistance than mono, but it is acceptable. The shelf life of Dacron is considered to be quite lengthy, but it would be well considered to replace lines yearly. Of all the Dacron lines, Micron has the least diameter.

The last line to be considered is a new entry in the field and seems to be far and away the best tested for deep jigging. The line is manufactured by Berkley and is marketed under the name of Alert. It is a Dacron over Kevlar line. It has less stretch than the straight Dacron thanks to the almost non-elastic Kevlar, and in 50# test has a diameter of only .025" and is perfectly round. It has a harder braid than the other Dacrons so it is much more abrasion resistant. It has a very unique factor in that as the load on the line begins to approach its breaking strength, the Kevlar begins to pop or ping, which can be heard or felt in the line. This can occur many times, over and over.

Below is a table of physical characteristics of the lines discussed.

Of all the five lines tested, Alert seems to be the best suited for deep jigging from several points of view. It has the smallest diameter of all the 50# lines; it has good abrasion resistance; it has less stretch than the ordinary Dacrons, and best of all, it seems to fish very well—seemingly as well as Ande mono. Its cost is a little more than Micron or the other Dacrons; it is about double Ande or Berkley Trilene.

Using, and getting used to a particular line is a very personal thing; so I'm sure I've left out some favorites of some of the guys out there. The purpose of this article was not to test and report on all mono lines, Dacron lines or whatever, but merely to list objectively the basic differences and/or advantages in the three or four major line classifications. Also cranked into the article is a year's worth of deep jigging from Florida to Maine, from Block Island to Cashes Ledge, with Jeffries Ledge thrown in for good measure.

On a number of both inshore and offshore trips this summer, an interesting pattern emerged. Except for double-headers, ninety percent of the cod, pollack, mackerel, and haddock we caught, were taken on a teaser. Not only that, but a particular teaser outfished tubes, snappazappas and any and all other varieties by three, four, and maybe five to one.

In looking back over the other teasers analytically, a few very important differences come to light.

BRAND	TYPE	DIAMETER	TEST
Ande	Mono	.030"	50 lb.
Berkley	Mono	.030"	40 lb. (?)
Greenspot	Dacron	.025-.035"	IGFA 50 lb.
Micron	Dacron	.020-.030"	IGFA 50 lb.
Alert	Dacron/Kevlar	.025"	IGFA 50 lb.

The first, and probably most important is the use of "Glow Tubing" as an integral part of the teaser. Another major consideration is the use of natural bucktail to simulate the body of some sort of bait. Bucktail undulates in the water giving the teaser its elusive action. The amount of bucktail used should be kept down to give a "sparse" tie. The size of the finished teaser is, of course, important. We used some that were five inches long, and some (more effective) that were seven to eight inches long. We are experimenting with a teaser that is ten inches long; but more on that possibly in a future article. To achieve the seven to eight inch length, a 9/0 O'Shaughnessy hook is used (Mustad #34007). If a smaller teaser is desired, use a 7/0 hook. (See photo.)

They are fished in a conventional manner, tied into a swivel some sixteen to eighteen inches above the jig on a short (six inch long) heavy mono leader. At times, the addition of a short squid tentacle helps out. Do not overdo this sweetener, as too much destroys the teaser's action in the water.

The teaser apparently represents a number of food sources to the cod, such as squid, sand eels, herring or whatever. Part of its effectiveness is its very live-appearing action in the water. Just a small twitch on the line, and the teaser zips through the water like a frightened bait fish. As an aside, bucktails and streamer flies have been among the most effective producers of large trout going back to the earliest days of freshwater angling for sport. Now, let's run through the materials needed to make a supply of teasers:

A suitable vise (machinist, fly tying or even a pair of vise grips).

A large, natural bucktail (hair 4-5" long).

A dozen or more of 9/0 Mustad #34007 hooks (stainless steel).

Two lengths of "Glow Tubing": 5/16" and 7/16" Dia.

A spool of size C or D white nylon thread.

Strands of Mylar as fine as possible.

Now, let's start to tie up some of these beauties.

1. Secure the hook in your vise and file both sides of the barb to sharpen it. This is very important.

2. Cut off a pinch of white bucktail about the size of a match. Even off the butt ends by placing the hair in an old film container, lipstick top, or even a .38 Spt. shell case, butts down. Tap the container on the bench. Remove the hair and tie it on the hook at the bend. Place four strands of Mylar on top of the bucktail and tie in. Coat with head cement.

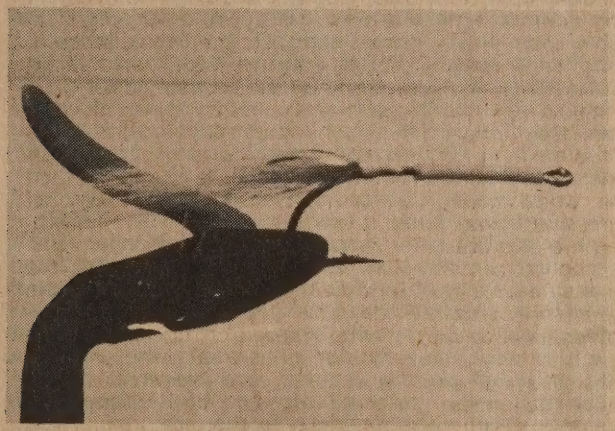
3. Take a piece of 5/16" Glow Tubing about 1¼" long and thread on over hook eye so that it covers the thread holding the hair. It might be easier to put the Glow Tubing on the hook from the point before mounting the hook in the vise. It can be difficult to thread the tubing over a 9/0 hook eye.

4. Cut another pinch of white bucktail the size of a match and prepare as above; tie on the hook near the head. Put four strands of Mylar on top of the hair and coat with head cement. Remove hook from vise and reverse (point upward) in vise. Cut another pinch of bucktail and tie it on reverse side of hook shank. Tie in Mylar strands and finish as above. Coat entire head with cement.

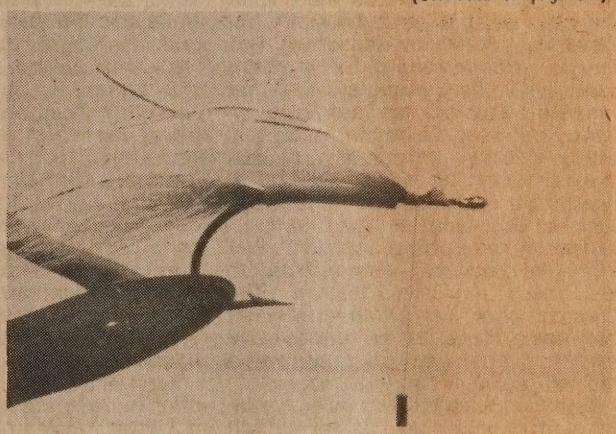
5. Cut a 1/2" piece of 7/16" Glow Tubing and thread over hook eye and head winding.

That's all there is to tying the teaser. It does not have to be fancy; just rugged. Don't skimp on the cement when tying in the bucktail. Make sure it is well worked into the individual hair butts. This makes the hair into a solid mass and does not allow the individual hairs to be

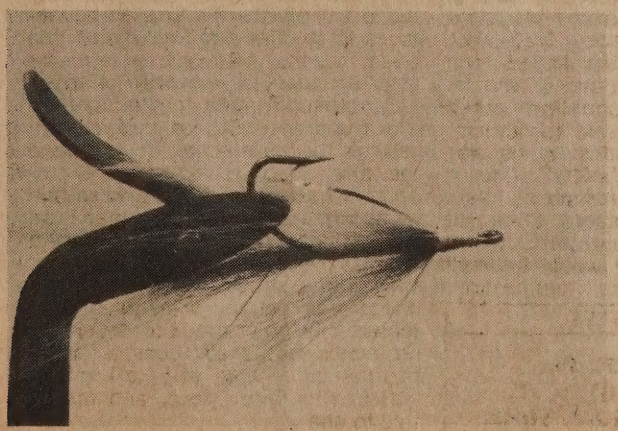
(Continued on page 27.)



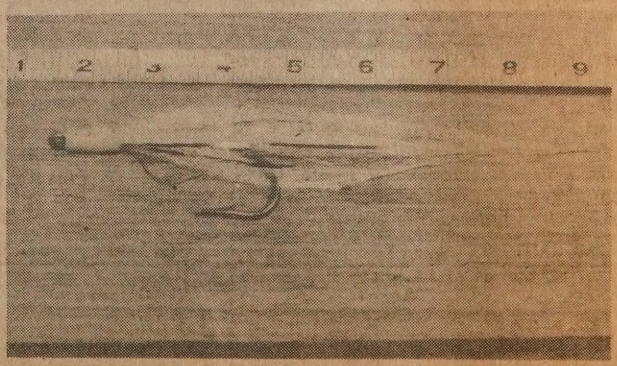
This is what your teaser should look like after Steps one, two and three.



This is what the teaser should look like after the first half of step four is completed.



This is what the teaser should look like after step four is finished.



The finished teaser. Note length of almost eight inches.

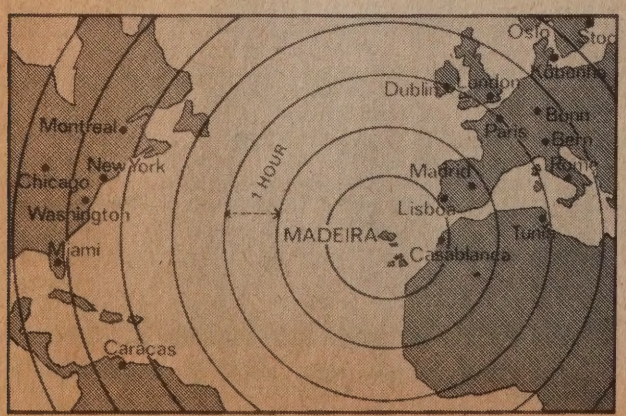
FISHING VACATIONS:

MADEIRA ISLANDS

by Scott J. Simons

Where to go for a vacation can often be a tough decision to make for the avid Long Island fisherman—particularly so if he is married. While you want to go somewhere that provides some great sport fishing of a type that isn't available in local waters, the vacation spot must also have some attraction for the better half. It just doesn't go over too well with the missus when you announce "Great news, babe—we're going to spend our vacation this year in tropical Gwokamala! I heard about this quaint little fishing camp located in a very scenic jungle where you fish with the natives from dugout canoes. Doesn't that sound exciting? There's not much nightlife, but Charlie told me that the tarpon they catch there will knock the socks off you!" Naturally, after the wife has asked a couple of dozen probing questions and discovered that you have to hike for three days through a tropical rain forest to reach the "quaint" little camp, which has no toilet facilities, and the nightlife consists of trying to keep a fire going to scare off the alligators, snakes and other undesirables, and it's not the fish that will "knock the socks off you" but the mosquitoes that look more like baby sea robins, your wife informs you in no uncertain terms that she wouldn't go on a vacation with your fishing buddy ol' Charlie if it was an all expense paid trip to ShangriLa, she puts the kibosh on your choice for a vacation. So you end up spending a week visiting your mother-in-law in sunny Jersey City.

If you have had this problem in the past and are getting a little tired of the Jersey City routine, try this one on your wife. Tell her that you want to take her on a vacation to Europe, where she'll spend time seeing Lisbon, Portugal, before making a short trip to a beautiful, semi-tropical island off the coast of Africa that has the most perfect climate in the world: the Madeira Islands. Where all the well-to-do Europeans head when winter comes, to relax on the scenic volcanic islands where there is gourmet dining at hot dog stand prices. Sure, you want to go fishing a few times, but you want to take her with you because it's more like sightseeing. A cab (which is a Mercedes Benz) picks you up at your hotel and delivers you to the boat, a modern sportsfisherman with all the latest, American-made equipment, and you spend the day big game fishing on perpetually flat calm seas only a mile or so from the scenic shore. The crystal clear, blue water is teeming with giant blue marlin, swordfish and several species of giant tuna—bluefin, bigeye and yellowfin tuna all pass through the waters of Madeira on their migrations, and there are scores of other species available. And although a vacation in Madeira may cost a little more than one to Jersey City, your vacation shouldn't cost any more than one to Florida or one of the tourist trap islands down south!



I made my first trip to the Madeira Islands in September of 1978 with Elwood Harry of the International Game Fish Association. We were there as guests of T.A.P. Airlines to observe the great sport fishing there that they wanted to develop to attract American tourists. I wrote about this trip in the February 22, 1979 issue of L.I.F. and told of the big game fish that we saw the local commercial fishermen bringing in, who only fished with hand lines from small dories a la the "Old Man and the Sea." In the marketplace where they brought their catches every morning to be sold, Elwood and I saw giant blue marlin that would have shattered IGFA World Records if they had been caught on rod and reel; giant tuna stored in a coldroom hung up in long rows on meathooks like sides of beef, and hundreds of bills that had been cut off broadbill swordfish stacked on the floor like cordwood. Although we didn't get much opportunity to fish ourselves, I decided that I had to come back to this beautiful island with my wife.

The return trip was made in 1979, when a group of nine left New York to spend the last week of May in Madeira. The party consisted of Jerry Kenny, fishing columnist for the **New York Daily News**; Barry Gibson, associate editor of the **Salt Water Sportsman**; Al Ristori, and three couples: John and Vivienne DeMaio, Paul and Nancy Neff, and my wife Mary and I. The four outdoor writers were there for obvious reasons, and John was there to advise the captains and crews of Madeira Seafaris, which operates the charterboats sailing on the island, about matters relating to chartering and fishing. Paul was along to make a documentary movie of the trip, but unfortunately his videotape equipment was slightly damaged in transit, and put out of action. The three wives were along to help the Portuguese economy and test the men of U.S. Customs. (Portugal won, Customs lost.)

On the first day we spent in Madeira, Fernando Soeiro of Madeira Seafaris arranged for our group to have dinner in one of the many local restaurants, which turned out to illustrate the quality of dining on the island. The dinner was soup to nuts, all entrees delicious, the waiters continued bringing food until we begged for mercy, and there was unlimited Madeira wine. Eleven people were served. The tab? Eighty-one dollars, plus a dollar tip! (The dollar tip was customarily correct.) Compare this with a dinner we had only a week previously in Montauk. Paul, Nancy, John, Vivienne, Mary and I had dinner at the Montauk Yacht Club to celebrate the forthcoming vacation to Madeira. The bill was $208—for half as many people eating food which can best be described as only fair to good.

I hate to talk about eating too much because it has little to do with fishing, but if you ever make it to Madeira you'll know why I was so impressed. Let me give you one more example: one afternoon my wife and

I walked into a small restaurant for lunch. After having a many course meal of great food and unlimited wine, I asked the waiter for a check. He came over and started writing on his pad with a pencil, noting what we had eaten. At one point he looked at the basket of fresh baked bread that we hadn't touched. "Oh," he said "you didn't have any bread?" He then turned over the pencil, made an erasure and gave us credit for the uneaten bread! Can you imagine that happening in the States?

We all stayed in the Hotel Quinta do Sol in Funchal, in suites furnished and decorated better than most of our homes. While the girls went shopping in the many shops and boutiques in Funchal, the rest of us went fishing. The six fishermen split into two groups: the first consisted of Jerry Kenny, Barry Gibson and Al Ristori, with John, Paul and myself in the second. Madeira Seafaris provided us with two of their thirty-foot twin diesel Trojan charterboats—the Torpedo II and Torpedo III. The big game fishing, we were told by Fernando, had been very disappointing because the blue marlin were way overdue because of unusually low water temperatures or something. But a school of giant bigeye tuna had been located by the local commercial fishermen the day before, so we'd take a shot at a world record. This seemed a little cocky at the time until it turned out that the school consisted of bigeyes ranging from 300 lbs. and up, all potential records.

The first day turned out to be disappointing and quite aggravating. The commercial handliners were killing the fish, but we couldn't get a touch on the Torpedo III. The handliners were chumming with live mackerel, and the tuna just wouldn't look at the unbelievable assortment of brightly colored lures with skirts, shiny metal, tubes and other adornments that we skipped, plunged, dove and gurgled in front of them. The trio on the other boat, being more experienced in offshore fishing, had better luck by baiting the fish with a rigged mackerel they grubbed off one of the commercial fishermen. Barry Gibson hooked up with a big, bigeye on eighty pound tackle, but the hook pulled out after a short battle.

That night over another festive dinner, we all talked with Fernando about the day's events. It was decided unanimously that a change in tactics was in order. The bigeyes we had seen just weren't interested in artificials. After watching the local fishermen bailing fish all day, the answer seemed to lie in live-lining. The commercial boats had this type of tuna fishing down to a fine art. They used boats about sixty feet long that had a live bait well amidship that was the size of a large living room. In the morning, they used a small purse seine to net the day's supply of live mackerel to be used for both chum and bait. When they found the tuna, one man would climb up on the bait well and start chumming. Using a long-handled dip net, he would scoop up three or four live mackerel and drop them in the water. The bigeye tuna, swimming somewhere in the four thousand foot depths below, would eventually rise to the surface to feed on the macks. What came next was enough to shatter all the "golden rules" of big game fishing. Assumptions like "tuna are line shy" and "you have to hide the hook" were proved to be so much malarky—at least they were as far as the handliners we watched enviously all day were concerned.

When the school of bigeye rose to the surface, the rest of the crew on the commercial boat went to work. A lively mackerel was haphazardly put on an extremely large, rusty hook with no thought of hiding it. Attached to the hook appeared to be a few hundred feet of quarter-inch polyurethane line! Five men, using gloveless hands, lined up single file and held the line as the bait was almost hand fed to one of the surfacing fish. When the tuna was hooked, he was fought by hand, standing up—with the man at the head of the line doing most of the work. When he got worn out, he simply went to the end of the line and the next man started fighting the fish with straining muscles. Using this relay team method, the commercial guys were able to whip

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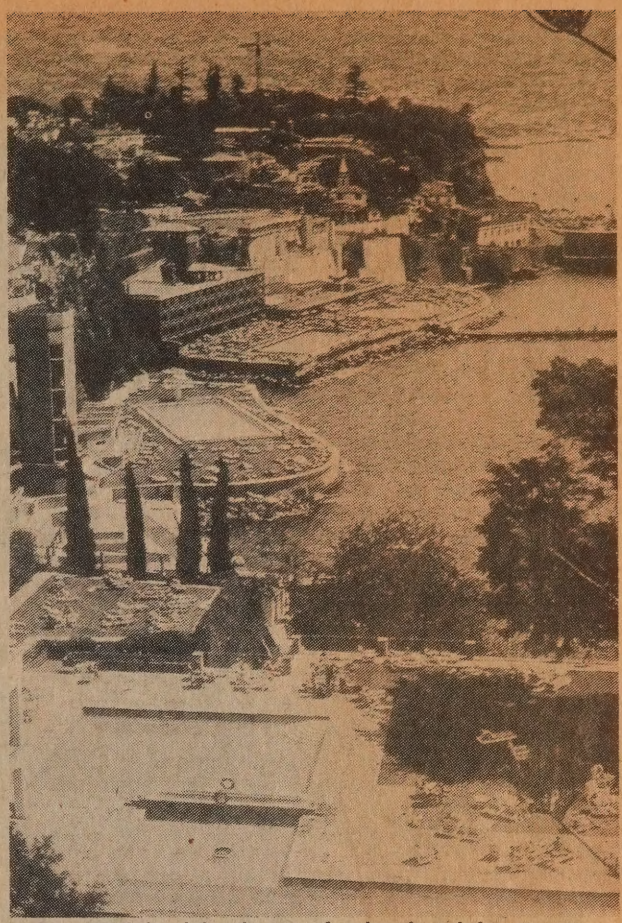
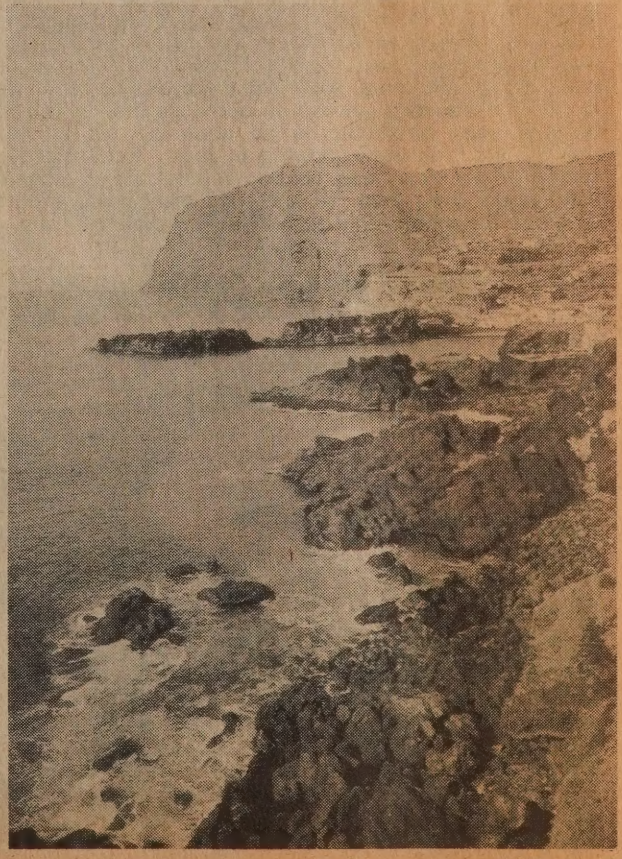


The Madeira Islands are of volcanic origin, so you only have to go a short distance from shore to find that deep, clear blue water that game fish love.



the tremendously powerful giants in only a few minutes. So it seemed simple enough: we'd just get us some live mackerel and bail the fish like the handliners, right? Wrong.

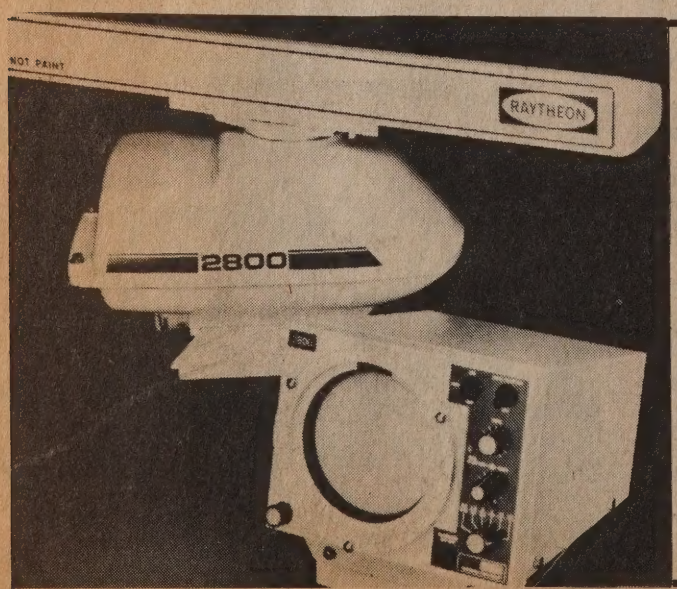
The first problem was getting the live bait. We didn't have a purse seine, and wouldn't know how to use one if we did. Catching our own on hook and line was out because of our limited time—we didn't want to waste half the day trying to catch bait because it appeared that the tuna were feeding in the morning. We finally asked Fernando if we could buy some from the commercial guys. He said no, but he was sure that they would give them to us if asked. "You've got to be kidding. They would **give** you live bait—even though you are competing for the same fish?" We had naturally figured that the two groups of fishermen didn't mix well, as so often is the case back home. But Fernando explained.

"No, we are all friends. They don't mind us fishing by them because they know we aren't going to catch many fish with our little rods and reels. Actually, they think we are all a little crazy for even trying. I guess you could say they think we are a joke. Watch what happens when you get a fish on, and you'll see what we mean." So the problem of where to get bait had been solved. The next problem was how to keep it alive. Seafaris had two aerators, but one of them was on the fritz. So one of the boats would have to try keeping their bait alive in a barrel lashed to the stern, which seemed doubtful. Somehow it was mysteriously decided that Jerry, Barry and Al would go on the boat that had the aerator and the three of us were stuck with constantly changing the water in the barrel on our boat. Actually, it turned out that this wasn't necessary, and we didn't have a mackerel die on us all day.

After pulling alongside one of the big boats and getting all the mackerel we wanted from the chuckling commercial fishermen, the captain of our boat, Eddie, moved the Trojan a respectable distance away and we started live-lining two mackerel on eighty pound class tackle. The next few hours were spent watching the handliners a short distance away bailing tuna. There goes a three hundred pounder in the box. Another. Another. Wow, that one looked like it was close to four—guaranteed an All-Tackle record! A runt, about two hundred fifty next. Fish after fish, the three of us counting and watching. After all, there was nothing else to do—the mackerel we had on our lines may have just as well been swimming in an aquarium for all the interest the tuna were showing in them. Eddie figured that the live chum was holding the school of bigeyes right under their boat, so our only chance was to get closer to the action. This was done very diplomatically, I might add. Friendly or not, Eddie edged the boat closer only a few feet at a time so he wouldn't interfere with the people making a living. This process took several more hours—a time during which both Paul and I hit the bunks and went to sleep. We had stayed up the previous night until the wee hours of the morning, watching our wives donating more American greenbacks to the Portuguese economy via the gambling casino in Funchal.

John gives Paul direction on how to fight the giant bigeye tuna that Paul was elected to bring in. Tony the mate looks on.

Finally, one of the Penn International reels began singing about one o'clock in the afternoon, and Paul and I came running out of the cabin. By this time John had picked up the rod and proceeded to set the hook. The tuna headed straight down, peeling off line at an incredible speed. When John felt the strength and weight of the fish, he turned to us and said, "Come on, will one of you guys take the rod?" Naturally, both Paul and I took a few backward steps at this point and put our hands in our pockets. Talking about it later, we found that each of us had already decided that if we did hook up with a fish we didn't want to pull it in. We were all tired, and it seemed too much like work. But after a few minutes of "not me, you take it" discussion, it was decided that Paul would have the honor of fighting the fish, who had been taking line all this time. Paul quickly went to work, and at one point I told John that it looked like Paul was losing and was about to give up. But after John chided him with "Go ahead and quit, Paul—but think of what Joe Smythe is going to say when we get back to Montauk!" This seemed to give Paul a second wind, and he bore down on the fish.



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Meanwhile, the Torpedo II pulled alongside so that Al, Jerry and Barry could take some pictures. After an hour's battle, the bigeye finally came up under the boat, belly up—it had virtually fought itself to death! And Fernando was right—as soon as Paul had hooked up with the fish, the commercial guys stopped fishing and spent the next hour watching the crazy Americans trying to catch a giant tuna on tiny reels with gossamer line, laughing all the while. We lashed the fish to the swim ladder on the stern, then headed back to Funchal for the weighing-in ceremony while the other guys stayed to try and bag one of their own.

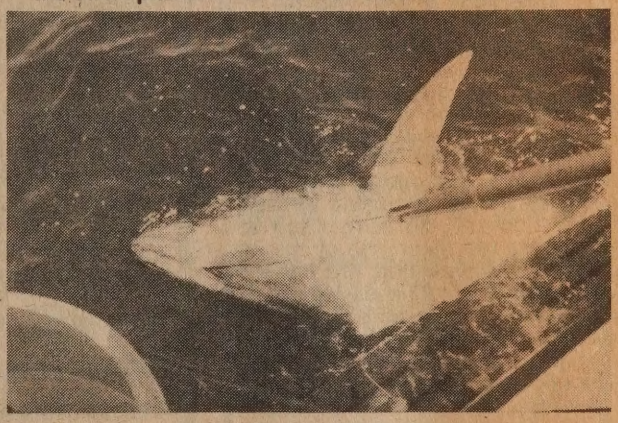
There was a period of time there that we all became a little nervous after we realized the size of the fish that Paul had just caught. On the ride back, it was agreed that the fish was well over three hundred pounds, and all of the IGFA World Records were in the three hundred pound range. The potential nightmare was that we may have just bagged a world record class fish only to have it disqualified because John had touched the rod. None of us had been thinking world record at the time, concerned only with who was going to do all the work. Strange as it seems, all of us were actually hoping that the fish **wasn't** a record.

I think we all breathed a little easier when the bigeye was put on the scales and weighed in at only 150 kilos—330 lbs.—missing the eighty pound class World Record by some twenty pounds. But it turned out that the fish was a record after all—a new European record, and under their rules the fish wasn't disqualified. Paul became an instant hero on the island, with newspaper and television reporters swarming all over him. Naturally, we all dubbed him "El Neffo," and have been ribbing him ever since. Unfortunately, the next day saw the school of tuna move to the windward side of the island and that was the end of the action.

That evening there was a banquet in honor of El Neffo, the great American tuna fisherman, and finally the time came to head back home. But we spent a day of sightseeing in Lisbon and getting rid of the last of our scooters (or whatever they called the money there). This past September, Fernando and two of the Seafaris captains came to the United States and spent a week fishing at Montauk. They are catering to a lot of American clientele, so they are very conscious of giving the people what they expect. They sampled shark fishing with Captain Warren Hader of the charterboat **Devilfish**, and spent a day with John on the **Vivienne** diamond jigging bluefish. Naturally, John couldn't resist the temptation of showing them the umbrella rig, which the guys from Madeira agreed was quite effective, but perhaps a bit too much like work for some of their European clientele. They also commented on the smallness of the blues caught—although they are not plentiful in the waters of Madeira, Fernando said that the bluefish caught there are usually in the thirty pound class! Indeed, the bluefish that held the All Tackle record for many years was caught off the coast of Africa. In any case, Fernando promised Jerry Kenny and I that he will send us a photo of the next bluefish over thirty pounds. Fernando had many other stories of the fishing in Madeira since we had left, too numerous to tell, but they served to whet our appetites for another shot at the big game fishing there. And next time we'll make a point of leaving the casinos no later than 2AM so that we have a little strength left the next day!

The air fare from Kennedy Airport to Madeira (via Lisbon) starts at a little over $400 round trip on T.A.P. Airlines, which is the airline of Portugal. Hotel accommodations range from a low of $149 to a high of $209 per week, and all I can say is that a comparable hotel in the States would almost cost that much for a single night. What you save on the hotel and dining more than makes up for the lower air fare to areas close to home. The best way to go is in a small group—like a few members of a fishing club, or a few couples—because you'll get a cheaper rate. If you'd like more information on going to Madeira, call Joe Teixera of T.A.P. Airlines at (212) 575-6500, or write him at 1140 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10036.

Gaffs were used to bring the bigeye tuna up on to the swim platform for the ride back to Funchal.



Paul, the tuna, mate Tony and Captain Eddie at the weigh-in ceremony.

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OLD TIMER'S CORNER: WEAKFISHING

(Continued from page 9.)

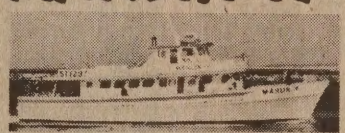
It would have been just as easy for those irresponsible, unsportsman-like "fishermen" to slide those fish back overboard when they were first caught. Ed looked at me in disgust and said something I'll never forget. "Matt," he said, "you are witnessing the beginning of the end of good weakfishing as we know it. From now on, if this keeps up, it's all downhill." Was he right? Let me ask you: "How did you make out the last time you went weakfishing?" Enough said.

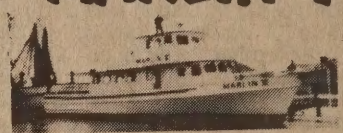
I know it would be unfair of me to accuse the lack of continued good weakfishing on individual fishermen. Certainly, there is more to it than that. But it has always been my thought that those unthinking fellows who indulged in this waste over the years must surely shoulder some of the responsibility of today's often lackluster fishing.

We may yet be fortunate to see a return to good weakfishing on occasion, and when we do, let's not follow in the footsteps of those senseless fellows of bygone years. Let conservation be the watchword of the day. If we do, there may yet come a time when you and I can again go out there and catch two hundred fighting, rod-bending weakfish without trouble.

If this article awakens pleasant memories, or if you wish to comment, drop me a line at 39 King Street. Hampton Bays, N.Y. 11946.

MARLIN IV ★ MARLIN V





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FISHING REPORTS

MONTAUK

The **Marlin V** reports they are getting out everyday and are getting very good catches mostly of cod with a scattering of pollack and blackfish as well. The cod are running 6-12 lbs., with a few fish in the 30s always good for the pool. The pollack are in the 5-12 lb. bracket. This is all on bait off Block Island.

Henry Colombi of the **Star Island Yacht Club** said that the only boat still in the water at the marina that is still fishing is Captain Harry MacAllister's "Wee Mack," but he has been slaughtering the codfish almost every trip to Southwest Ledge. Squidding with Ava-87 diamond jigs on Saturday, December 22, the score was 20 nice cod. Largest was a 42 lber. about 10 were in the thirties and the remaining nine fish ranged from 5-20 lbs. Sunday's catch was even better, with 30 cod and a few 10 lb. pollack taken that had a combined weight of 162 lbs. dressed. Harry scored again this past Friday with another 30 cod and a couple of big cod, all on jigs.

CAPTREE

Captain Dan of the **Captain Joseph Fleet** reports he had 35 cod come

over the rail Sunday. The pool fish tipped the scales at 59½ lbs. The happy angler was Michael DiGirolamo of Commack. The fish was lip-hooked and fortunately Mike was using a light stick. Dan says he's get 10-25 cod each day, fishing wrecks and open bottom on bait. He is generally working due south of the inlet in approximately 100' of water. This was the third cod over 50 lbs. caught on the **Joseph Fleet** so far this winter.

Speedy VI reports cod catches remain fair to good though the numbers were off on Sunday. Speedy reports 10-35 cod a day, depending on the day and sea conditions. He's been working both S.E. and S.W. of F.I. Inlet in 80-110' of water. Sizes are mixed from 8-40 plus lbs. all on bait. A few whiting and ling mixed in. This season's catches are a definite improvement over last year and Speedy sees a good January coming up for cod. The fish are scattered all over the bottom it seems.

Captain Gordon Roman of the **Captree Queen II** says he's noticed a slight improvement with most days producing anywhere from 12-20 cod of mixed sizes. He says the fishing is more consistent lately, fish being all males, some up to 35 lbs. The females seem to be either spawning right now or spawned out and soon they should be biting as well. There's been a gradual showing of smaller fish now also in the 4-10 lb. range. Even so, tshe boat is still getting a good proportion of cod over 30 lbs. Heavy winds this past week have discouraged scouting for new schools. The boat is working 12-15 miles off the beach. Sunday's catch included 2 cod in the 38-40 lb. class. Gordon says this all makes up an encouraging picture with a view towards more action in the month of January since setliners and trawlers are getting cod also. Sunday's total on the Queen was 15 cod of mixed sizes.

The Captain Scotty tells us there are still a lot of decent sized cod being caught every trip. This past week he had several that weighed 46 lbs. and several 48 lbers. There have been a few 4-5 lb. fish also. Lot of cod in the 25-48 lb. range with ling mixed in. Friday the boat had several 25-45 lb. fish come over the rail. Sunday's pool winner was a 40 lber. George says the water is STILL warm and the cod are running like bluefish. He advised not all the cod are jumbos. All fishing has been on hard bottom and on bait.

FREEPORT

The Miss Freeport II reports they are having excellent whiting fishing with catches of up to 2 buckets full a man fishing the Ambrose area, with some ling mixed in. Whiting running 1-3 lbs. and fishing is in 80-90' of water. Captain Tony says he'll be sailing weekends only through Janu-

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Special congratulations to Stan Sucharski as the 1979 Fisherman of the Year.

The Atlantic Anglers meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. Meetings are held at the West Side Inn, Broadway, Farmingdale. Guests are welcome. For further information contact Vic Consiglio at 799-0501.

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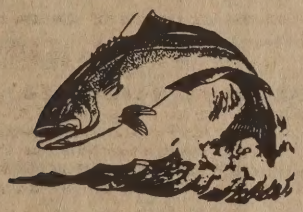

DEEP WATER COD JIGGING

(Continued from page 19.)

pulled out by the fish. You can expect a teaser to last for thirty or forty fish before you have to recycle it. The number of fish goes down drastically with bluefish. It is, however, quite durable. Save the hook and the tubing and re-use them on another teaser. Make sure to keep the hooks sharp. A file is better than a stone for this purpose.

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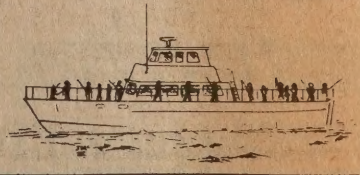

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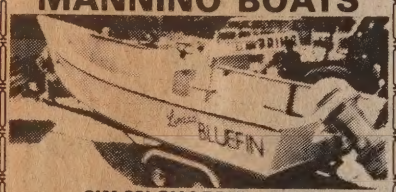

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ary. See ad for details.

Charter boat **Acme II** called to say while we were on vacation he had out Bob Kebenglirg who bagged a 28 lb. cod. Frank Figone had the pool fish of the day, a 42 lb. cod. Frank Burke bagged a 36 lber. This was 18 miles S.E. of Jones Inlet for Mike Fitzpatrick's group of Massapequa.

The **Starstream II** tells of a 40 lb. cod taken Saturday by Valley Stream angler DanCaravaggio. A 44 lber committed suicide Friday for Mike Bush of Woodhaven. Sunday's pool winner was a 35 lber. Friday and Saturday, saw a 22 lb. pollack caught plus an 8 and 10 lb. hake on Sunday. Some ling and blacks also being caught. The cod that are being taken are in the 5-45 lb. range. These mixed catches are being made on open bottom and on wrecks, all on bait.

The **Captain Al** reports on Saturday Ed Riley bagged a 38 lb. cod while John Pater took a 29 lber. On Sunday, Joe Lintrokst decked a 30 lb. cod while Lou Busso of Staten Island took a 29 lber. Friday saw Lou Sferavo of Seaford with a 36 lber. Joe Mackavoy of Kew Gardens decked a 32 lb. cod. This has all been on hard bottom. Al says there are now more 5-8 lb. cod moving in which are great eating fish. He sees a lot more action on the codfishing in January with greater numbers of the smaller cod even though the big guys should remain around also. This past week some slugging 5-7 lb. blackfish were also taken but this is more or less the last of the blacks. On December 15, Steve Yaworski of the Bronx pulled a 48 and a 26 lb. cod. Tina Malone of Portchester had a 44 lb. cod, Stan Ferret of E. Meadow had a 30 and a 44 lber., Matt Haley of Flushing came out on top with a 49 lb. cod. Babylon angler Pete Schmidt took home a 40 and a 44 lber.

POINT LOOKOUT

Captain Dennis of the **Marie III** had a reservation cod trip two Sundays back while we were still on vacation and the group pulled 5 good cod all in the last 1½ hours of the day's trip. The poo fish was a good 40 lber.

Captain Joe Long of the charter boat **Nite Owl** sailed his last charter of the year 1979 last Saturday. His charter for Vic Lanzone and party boated 3 cod up to 30 lbs. plus 175 lbs. of mackerel fishing 150° out of Jones in 110' of water.

SHEEPSHEAD BAY

The **New Elsie K III** reported very good whiting fishing over the weekend between the Ambrose and Sandy Hook Channels. Fish up to 3 pounds were taken on whiting bait with a high hook bagging as many as 60 fish. This action is found only 15 minutes from the Rockaway jetty.

The **Dorothy B** also found super action between the channels on Saturday. Catches of a 5 gallon bucket were common. With high winds, Sunday morning the boat moved over to the Scotland area and started the day with some nice catches of ling. Fares finished the day with good catches of whiting taken between channels. Most fishermen filled their 5 gallon buckets with fish taken on herring, ling and whiting bait.

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